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M A D R I D

IN

1835:

SKETCHES OF THE METROPOLIS

OF

S P A I N

A N D ITS INHABITANTS,

AND OF

SOCIETY AND MANNERS IN THE PENINSULA.

BY

A RESIDENT OFFICER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

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E. Lowe, Printer, Playhouse Yard, Blackfriars.

P R E F A C E.

THE present century hurries events along with such whirlwind rapidity—dashes with its rushing pinions the dust from ancient institutions—and in other respects changes so completely the very face of nations within a short period—that what to-day might be recognised as an exact and faithful portrait of them, may to-morrow be denied all merit of resemblance. Spain, however, is less under such influence than any other European country. Revolutions, it is true, have devastated, and still ravage her surface, but, like skaters on a field of ice, they

pass rapidly away, and leave but little trace behind. Thus, since these volumes were written, scarcely any change has taken place in the circumstances and political prospects of the country, with the exception of the new system of elections about to be tried, with doubtful success. The civil war is still raging with the same intensity ; the numerous evils that oppressed the country are still unremoved ; the general direction of affairs is far from being uniform or enlightened. But we must recollect, that in Pandora's box, Hope was found at the bottom.

As far as regards the capital itself, some municipal improvements have been recently made. The lighting of the streets is now nearly as well managed as in most other great towns of the continent. Commodious flagways are being laid down for the convenience and security of passengers. Above all, the beggars, with their rags, and vermin, and droning lamentations,

have disappeared. The present Corregidor deserves the highest credit for his exertions in ridding the inhabitants of this plague, and providing a fit lazaretto for its reception in the convent of San Bernardino.

The convents, too, are to be pulled down ! Few of these buildings merit respect from the shovel and pickaxe. Their architecture is usually vulgar and extravagant, where long dead walls do not constitute their only claim to admiration. Still, I confess, I like to see a host of cupolas and minarets sparkling and towering in the glorious sunset ; nor does the flowing costume of the friars, “ black, blue, white, and grey,” shew amiss in the motley crowd of picturesque costumes paraded in the streets. These, I think, look less Spanish, since the fathers have disappeared from the scene. Murillo and Zurbaran have immortalized the cowl and cassock, and custom has rendered both favourites with the

mass of the people, who will long regret the monks and their soup, doled out at the convent gate.

Madrid and the provincial capitals may possibly give some evidence of the action of a liberal government upon the manners and habits of their inhabitants. But it will require centuries to obliterate from the minds of the peasantry their ancient traditions, and to make them change their old and cherished way of life. In some respects, this tenacity does them honour ; and I trust that, whatever modifications the “lights of the age” and the “march of intellect” may effect in the general state of Spain, her noble peasantry will never relinquish, either their graceful garb and bearing, or their singular disinterestedness and integrity. Spain is an original and racy land, full of quaint prejudice and “auld lang-syne” memorials, which lend to it a mellow and attractive hue, and invest it with peculiar

charms to all who, like myself, are fond of wandering among the ruins, and living with the traditions and recollections, of the past.

If this age of regeneration succeed in working out the happiness and comfort of a noble race, whom centuries of oppression and misgovernment have failed to debase, I shall hail its advent with delight.

Madrid—March, 1836.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

- Approach to Madrid—Entrance—Internal View of—the
Retiro—Approach by the Valencia Road—the Manza-
nares—the Picturesque Population of Madrid . page 1.

CHAPTER II.

- Appearance of Madrid—the Costumes seen in Madrid—the
Streets of Madrid—the Houses—the Street of Alcala—
the Trinda de Comestibles— the Aleala—Costumes of
Madrid—Robber Cavaliers—Madrid Shopping—the Dogs
of Madrid—Galeras in Madrid—Unhoused Shopkeepers
—Cobblers of Madrid—Tailors—Migratory Shopkeepers
—Guitar Players—Convents—Monks—Nuns—Religious
Houses—Street Dangers of Madrid—Fencing Masters—
the Paving—Singular Heraldic Chains—Appearance of
Madrid p. 18.

CHAPTER III.

- Hotels and Coffee-houses of Madrid—Hired Carriages—
Reflections p. 67.

CHAPTER IV.

Lodging-houses of Madrid—Landladies—Spanish Land-lady's Pertinacity—Lodging-house Exactions—the Respectable Lodging-houses—Lodging-house Tactics. p. 77.

CHAPTER V.

Interior of a Spanish House—General Poverty of Spanish Furniture—Sordidness of Household Expenditure—many Tenancies of a Spanish House—Spanish Aversion to Fire-places—Display—Toilet—Usual Avocations of the Ladies—Spanish Meals—the Siesta—Finish of the Day. p. 91.

CHAPTER VI.

Servants—their Apathy—their Vindictiveness—Female Servants—the Nastiness of Spanish Domestics—their Carelessness p. 106.

CHAPTER VII.

The Markets—Variety of Vegetables—Fish—Filthiness of the Markets—Insolence of the Venders—the Supineness of the Laws p. 114.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Management of the Funds—the Street-lighting—the Street-cleansing—Various Municipal Superintendents—Proposed Improvements p. 124.

CHAPTER XIII.

Tertulias—Feats in Smoking—Freedom of Social Inter-course—Social Adventures—Style of Conversation—Good Taste of the Tertulias—Tertulian Scandal—Amusements—the Costumes—Distribution of the Guests—Tertulian Gossip—Maria Pepa—the Rich Bachelor—the Guardsman—Breaking up of the Tertulia—Ministerial Tertulias—Official Parties p. 241.

CHAPTER XIV.

Masked Balls—Masks—Description of the Characters—Santa Catalina—the Masquerade—Masquerade Dissipation—the Masked Ball—the Author's Adventure—the Palace of the Duke of Abrantes—Spanish Intrigue—Spanish Passion for Masked Balls—Conclusion . p. 275.

CHAPTER XV.

Bull Fights—their Antiquity—their Extravagance—the Breeding of the Bulls—the best Bull Fighters—Royal Patronage of Bull Fighting—the Royal College of Bull Fighting—the National Passion for Bull Fights—Female Passion for Bull Fights—the Scene previous to the Bull Fight—the Plaza de Toros—Description of the Fight—the Bull slain—Appeal to the Ladies against Bull Fights—Conclusion p. 294.

CHAPTER IX.

Puerta del Sol—its Frequenters—Thieves and Shoeblocks—the Panorama of the Puerta—the Dandies—the Military—the Military Idlers—the Crowd—the Spanish Belles—Madridlenian Quidnunes—the Dispersion—the Carlist—the Sponger—the Evening—the Night p. 136.

CHAPTER X.

The Post Office p. 161.

CHAPTER XI.

The Prado—the Extent of the Prado—the Saloon—Irrigation of the Prado—Company of the Prado—Saloon of the Prado—the Fountain del Berro—Chit Chat of the Prado—Spanish Fan Exercise—Unhappy Lovers—the Spanish Ladies' Feet—Equipages—Costumes—the Close of the Promenade—Water Merchants—Treating—the Solitude of the Prado p. 177.

CHAPTER XII.

The Theatres—their Origin at Madrid—the Rival Theatres—Royal Play Writer—Spanish Italian Opera—Comedy versus Pantomime—Theatrical Feuds—Prices of Seats—the Widows' Fund—the Lighting of the Theatres—their Internal Economy—the Manners of the Audience—Theatrical Adventure—Unfortunate Results—the Comedians—Albini—Religious Rites of the Actors—Abuses of the Ticket Office—New Theatre p. 206.

CHAPTER XVI.

- The National Gallery of Spain—Description of the Building—Arrangement of the Pictures—Comparison of the Spanish and Italian Painters—Ribera—Description of Pictures—the “Nativity” of Murillo—the “Conception” of Murillo p. 323.

CHAPTER XVII.

- The Armoury—Description of the Building—the Weapons of great Personages—Defensive Armour—Curious Moorish Head-piece—Conclusion p. 335.

CHAPTER XVIII.

- New Year’s Day—New Year’s Jokes—Conversation—Don Bernardo—New Year’s Pastimes—Conclusion . p. 341.

CHAPTER XIX.

- Twelfth Night—Spanish Respect for Lovers—the Abandon of Spanish Lovers—Tertulian Amusements—the Passion for Dancing—Arrangements for the Masked Ball—Obduracy of Papas—Breaking up of the Tertulia—Conclusion p. 351.

CHAPTER XX.

- Shrove Monday—Amusements—Opinions on a Crowd—the Dance p. 362.

CHAPTER XXI.

- The Fair—the Antiquities of the Fair—the Merchandise—
the Fairings—the Fair Advocated—the Removal of the
Fair—Conclusion p. 373.

CHAPTER XXII.

- Christmas—Preparations for Christmas—Christmas Fare—
Sweetmeats—Amusements—Christmas Market—Christ-
mas Visits—Christmas Pastimes—Christmas-eve Mass—
Conclusion p. 383.

E R R A T A.

- P. 1, line 3, *for* Mauzanares, *read* Manzanares.
P. 32, line 8, note, *for* Membrino, *read* Mambrino.
P. 35, line 1, *for* the street, *read* the Bond Street.
P. 64, line 4, *for* Often, *read* Of ten.
P. 64, line 9, *for* seeing finish, *read* seeing nine finish.
P. 102, line 4, *for* preludes, *read* fouloirs.
P. 103, line 5 from bottom, note, *for* allowance, *read* allowing.
P. 107, line 1, note, *for* Asturias, *read* Asturians.
P. 108, line 12, *for* "No lose," *read* "No lo se."
P. 115, line 7, *for* Castello, *read* Castille.
P. 115, line 14, *for* Juisoto, *read* Quixote.
P. 127, line 1, *for* propiros, *read* propios.
P. 128, line 10, *for* *erbigratia*, *read* *verbi gratia*.
P. 136, last line, note, *for* Francisco, in Pereda, *read* Francisco de Pereda.
P. 139, line 14, *for* muros eulogiae, *read* muros, eulogize.
P. 144, line 14, *for* skakos, *read* schakos.
P. 156, line 11, *for* Diu Bled Biev, *read* Bien usted, Bien.
P. 157, line 18, *for* Provida del Otro, *read* Por vida del otro.
P. 159, line 11, *for* asnos, *read* asses.
P. 176, line 10, *for* name, *read* secure.
P. 193, line 2, note, *for* companion, *read* comparison.
P. 203, line 1, note, *for* thirty *read* thirsty.
P. 214, line 8, *for* (14s.), *read* (13s.).
P. 214, line 12, *for* (3d., 4d. to 10d.), *read* (1s. 6d. to 10d.)
P. 214, line 13, *for* (2d., 6d. to 10d.), *read* (2s. 6d. to 10d.)
P. 215, line 4, *for* imbilados, *read* jubilados.
P. 219, line 3 from bottom, *for* surprised, *read* inspired.
- P. 220, line 10, *for* set, *read* sex.
P. 222, line 7 from bottom, *for* fired, *read* fixed.
P. 223, line 7, *for* Boy, *read* Pray.
P. 237, line 7, *for* no, *read* some.
P. 252, line 9, *for* chorefleur, *read* choufleur.
P. 255, line 1, note, *for* sum, *read* case.
P. 259, line 10, *for* surprise, *read* suspense.
P. 265, line 2, *for* Boy, *read* Pray.
P. 269, line 7, *for* Boy, *read* Pray.
P. 271, line 1, *for* love, *read* leave.
P. 272, line 3, *for* private, *read* principal.
P. 276, line 7, note, *for* (40,000 cents), *read* (40,000 pounds.)
P. 287, line 3 from bottom, *for* dames, *read* dances.
P. 289, line 18, *for* Atalmo, *read* Catalina.
P. 289, line 1, note, *for* Carlista, *read* Carlota.
P. 302, line 6, note, *for* followed, *read* blamed.
P. 308, line 1, *for* clami, *read* clumsy.
P. 309, line 13, *for* home-guards, *read* horse-guards.
P. 314, last line, note, *for* bull, *read* bolt.
P. 316, line 5, *for* time, *read* terror.
P. 317, line 3 from bottom, note, *for* 15l., *read* 18l.
P. 332, line 17, *for* Morocca, *read* Morena.
P. 333, line 3, *for* clara, *read* chiar.
P. 334, line 7, *for* Eloiz y Avelarde, *read* Daoiz and Velarde.
P. 339, line 12, *for* more, *read* man.
P. 340, line 1, *for* detached, *read* detailed.
P. 342, line 8, *for* plays, *read* plans.
P. 358, line 8, *for* I have the, *read* I have forgotten the.
P. 360, line 12, *for* making, was reserved, *read* masking was resumed.
P. 380, line 18, *for* well-entertained, *read* well-intentioned.

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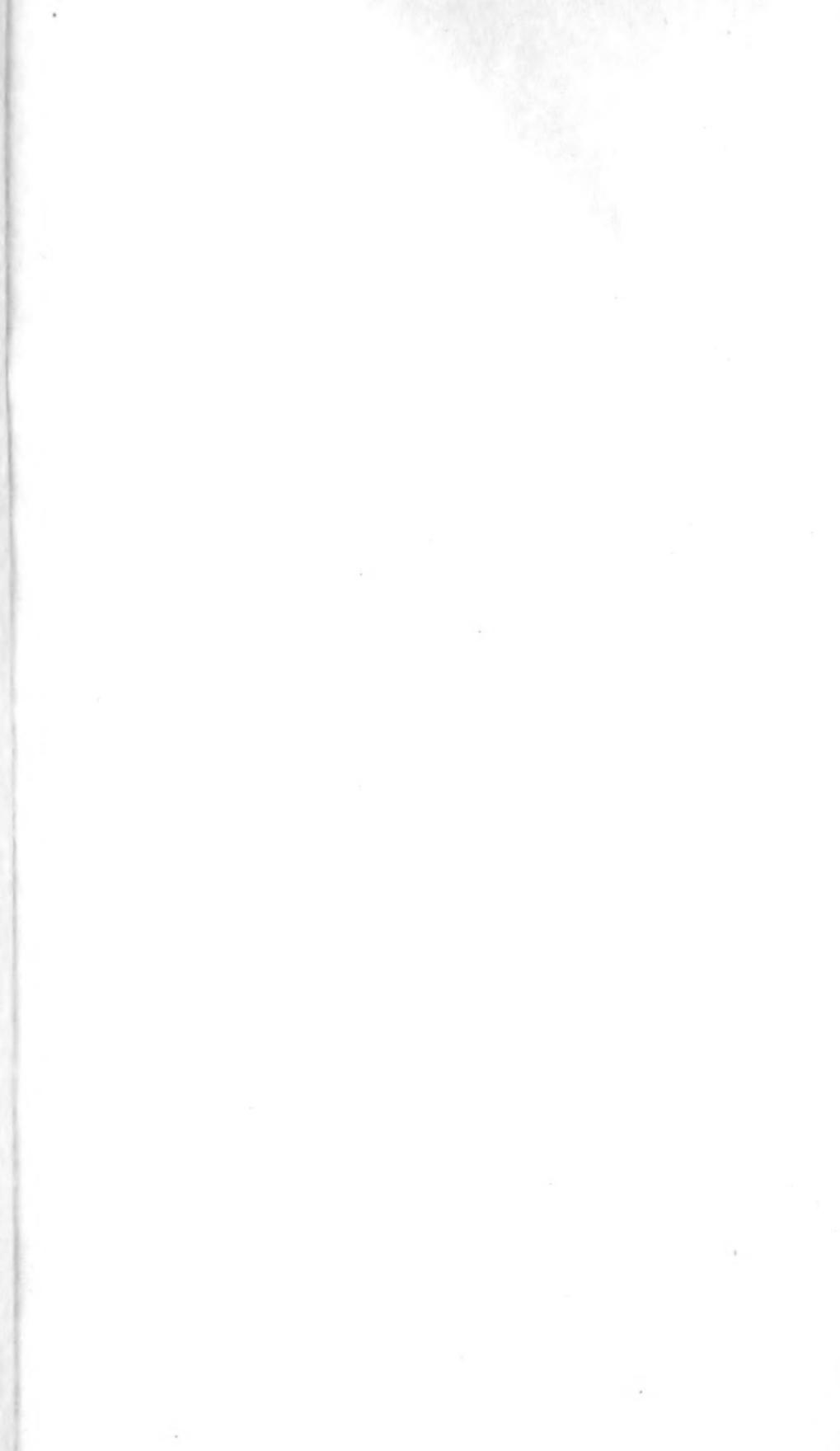
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CHAPTER I.

Approach to Madrid—Its Entrance—Internal View—and Retiro—Approach by the Valencia Road; The Mauzanares, and the Picturesque Population of Madrid.

THE approach to a great capital, for the first time, is apt to excite new feelings in the drowsiest or most jaded imagination. The idea of soon being in the midst of a busy stranger crowd, equally careless and ignorant of your existence, anxiously following their own particular pursuits; their horizon bounded and confined by the selfish and narrow circle of local interests, leaving no room for sympathy towards a stranger; passing down the stream of life, without casting a backward look upon those whose

course may be less rapid, or stretching forth a helping hand to the wearied and the faltering—all this, and more, strikes the wanderer as he draws nigh to those hotbeds of egotism and civilization; as he mixes with a mass of beings, like himself indeed, but among whom he is condemned to a solitude far more lonely than that of the mountain or the desert, and rendered still more painful by the freezing welcome of an inn.

But wherefore dwell on what has ever been, on what must ever be! The world, after all, is but a vast caravansery, where those who arrive, as well as those who depart, separate with pleasure from their former travelling companions, and strike with new animation into a fresh road, in hopes of its leading them to more smiling landscapes, and brighter flowers scattered on their path,—hopes destined to meet with the same disappointment as before, gradually sinking into a sense of fresh *ennui*, a new repetition of the past.

Whether it be from the little that is known of the manners and peculiarities of the singular people whose capital I am now approaching, the chivalrous page they have filled in history,

ancient and modern, coupled with their known dislike to, perhaps contempt for, strangers, nowhere do such feelings present themselves more forcibly than here; and the Bayonne road, that most usually taken by foreigners, is but ill adapted to qualify and dissipate such a train of thinking.

When, at length, you learn from the postilion that you have reached the last relay before entering MADRID, of which there is but one in the world, and of which you have heard so much—involuntarily you rub your eyes, and look about for the usual indications of the vicinity of a great metropolis; but in vain you search for those fair contrasts of lawn and woodland so fondly dwelt upon in the book of “Monteria,” of the good king Don Alonzo the Eleventh; or expect to find the balmy climate and gentle seasons, extolled beyond all praise by the old chronicler Fernandez de Olviedo, and other worthies.* No neat and thriving town, cheer-

* This old legendary, Nunez de Castro, Father Davila, and others, have written themselves into fits of exclusive predilection and fondness for Madrid, elevating it above all capitals, ancient and modern. “*Solo Madrid es corte,*” “Madrid alone is worthy of being called a Court”—

ful hamlet, proud castle, or elegant villa residence of the grandee, royal seat of Pleasaunce, chasse, wood, or water,—in short, no exterior or agreeable marks of the opulent suburbs of a proud city, anywhere present themselves.

“There is but one Madrid in the world,” are but feeble expressions in the mouth of Master Nunez de Caстро. He tells us, “As to the supplies for daily sustenance, whether for splendour and delicacy, exquisite eatables and drinkables, if their profusion was not so common, it would appear miraculous.”—But habit takes away admiration—“Confining myself to mere eatables, there is no bird so wild, nor fish so rare, that if any city enjoy it, Madrid will come by it.” “In made dishes, industry has been pushed so far, that cunning books are in heaps on the shelves of the kitchens of princes and noblemen. One might fancy that in Madrid had been published the invitation of Xerxes, promising a reward to those who should invent new ‘flatteries’ for the palate. In drinks of strange excellence, or wholesome fruits made palatable in crucibles, or sweet smells, offspring (*bijos*) as they seem of the inhabitants of our court, so profusely are they lavished—a great abundance remains after so extravagant a consumption.”

Davila declares that “the fertility of the soil is known over the whole world, being most noble, precious, fat, and productive—giving choice bread and generous wines in great abundance. Of meat, game, and birds, as sheep,

Still you speed onwards as fast as six fleet mules can carry you. The objects fly on each side in quick succession, presenting miserable

bulls, the boldest of all Spain, on the banks of the Jarama, two leagues from Madrid—stags and deer of all kinds, rabbits and hares in great quantity, partridges and every species of birds, it has the fattest and best in the world. To the fertility of its soil and happy aspect of its stars, Madrid owes her agreeable groves, fresh and grateful meadows, delicious spots and lawns, and pasture grounds, abounding with food for cattle. An almost infinite number of gardens and orchards, with a variety of flowers and fragrant roses, of which we shall speak when treating of the pleasure houses in the suburbs,” &c. &c. Fernandez de Olviedo adds, “There is also another testimony of the purity of the air, that, although one sees great numbers of cats and dogs dead in the streets, they do not breed worms, but the air parches them up, leaving their bodies entire and dry.”

This last assertion of the old chronicler is perfectly correct, and the only remnant of all the preceding varied eulogies on the Spanish metropolis, its neighbourhood, climate, and productions. The only wood near Madrid, at present, is that of the Pardo, two leagues distant, but generally so hidden in the valleys, as to afford neither ornament nor shelter to the town. Thence, to the mountains of Guadarrama, the traveller cannot count a dozen trees of any description.

groups of wretched hovels—a wooden weather-beaten cross on the road-side, with some stones cast around its base, marking a spot of violence and blood; a pebble or two placed upon its branches, indicating the *de profundis* of some pious passenger for the soul of the murdered man—a turnpike with its modern lodge, the thing most like civilization to be seen—the fair and distant view of the bold and snow-topped Guadarrama on the right, with the arid though cultivated plains of New Castile receding and undulating into distance like the billows of a vast ocean—far, far off the white walls of some village glaring in the sun—no tree to break the sad and stern monotony of hillock following hillock, until lost in the horizon.

At length the Convent of Chamartin,* with

* This spot refreshes the eye by its comparative shade and verdure. The convent is rich and flourishing. The Duke del Infante has a palace here, from which Napoleon issued his famous decree, and terrified the capital into a surrender with an “order of the day.” This convent was, not long since, the rendezvous of a junta of supposed Carlist conspirators, who were arrested here by a party of “Salvaguardias” (a newly-established horse

its patches of verdure, refreshes the eye, wearied of its wandering : a few minutes more, and domes and minarets and high tapering

police.) The chief was a Colonel O'Farril, a gentleman of Irish extraction, past sixty years of age. He was bound tightly like the rest, his arms being closely pinioned behind, and almost made to meet by the pressure of the cords. On approaching the gate of San Fernando, the old veteran, blushing at the thought of being dragged through the streets of the capital like a malefactor, thus sullying the uniform he wore, entreated his escort not to insist on his entering the town in this state—his request was refused. He then asked leave to retire and satisfy some natural exigency, which was, it seems, granted. It is said, that he declared he would prefer being shot to being thus exposed to the curiosity and insult of a mob. “Is that all?” retorted his guard—“have then your wish!” and immediately drew a pistol and shot him through the head. This is the *fact*. The policeman’s excuse for this atrocious act was, that his prisoner had attempted to disarm him. But a respectable and perfectly veracious friend of the author, who saw the corpse lying on the road almost immediately after the murder, declared publicly that the cords had not been removed, and that the arms remained so firmly pinioned behind, as to render any such attempt not only fruitless but impossible. The soldier has not been, nor will he be called to any further account; though the blood of an old servant of his country, arrested only on suspicion, is upon his head.

steeple-spring from the earth, as at the touch of a magician's wand;* their light and elegantly formed cupolas, reflecting the sun's rays on their tin or leaden coverings, and bringing to the mind the capitals of the East. The powder-magazine, with its solitary sentry, now strikes the view; next, the "Campo Santo," or cemetery—the resting place of so many thousands who have lived strangers to each other through life, to be united only in death,—exhibits its long white inclosure and large black cross in front of the entrance; a few paces farther, and the Palace of the Duke of Alba, with its gardens,† the College of the

* The approach by the Bayonne Road is considerably more elevated than the site of the city; until you are nearly at the gate, you can only distinguish the tops of the steeples and towers below.

† This noble mansion is considered the best specimen of Italian architecture in Madrid. It has a lawn in front, something in the English style, and the gardens are extensive, though partaking of the disadvantageous position of the house itself; being situated in a deep hollow, completely commanded by the high road which skirts the back of the garden. Its great distance from the frequented parts of the town, is also a great drawback from its value. A fire broke out in the upper stories in the

Jesuits, and the chimney tops of the Royal Palace, afford indications of the metropolis being at hand.

On driving through the gate “*de los Pozos*” a dirty cravatless *riscuardo*, preferring shoes and stockings, as more convenient than boots, mounts an ill accoutred horse, a rusty spur attached to either heel, with a huge sabre of English fabric hanging from his waist, accompanies your carriage at a hobbling canter, to the coach office, but by no means increases the illusion. It is difficult to believe oneself in the far-famed “metropolis of Spain and the Indies,” until the wretched accommodation, filthy attendance, and extravagant charges, fully con-

year 1833, which, although it did but little damage to the building itself, destroyed a quantity of the costly antique furniture, and valuable books and pictures. Notwithstanding a cordon of troops was placed round the house, some of the light-fingered gentry contrived to introduce themselves, and to carry off anything and everything portable; valuable old editions of rare books were hawked about for weeks afterwards for little or nothing in the remote quarters of the city; among other articles, a superb miniature portrait of the Duchess was sold to a friend of the family for two *pesetas* (eighteen-pence !)

vince the most incredulous of having, at length, reached the wished-for goal.*

No Spaniard, jealous of the reputation of his country's capital, should allow a stranger to enter it by any other road than that of Alcalà de Henares. The approach, on this side, is grand and imposing. Once past the *Quinta del Espiritu Santo*,† Madrid begins to unroll

* If you happen to be in a public conveyance, you are driven to the coach office, accompanied as above, to prevent smuggling, I suppose, *Risguardo*, meaning “a check,” a defence against any project. You and your baggage are delivered over to the inspectors of customs, who are usually very civil; a peseta (ten-pence) given to the porter generally settles things amicably enough. If you are in a private carriage, the same cavalier follows you as he best can; as a very great favour, sometimes an employé of the customs will come and make his visit when you stop; but this is rare and seldom granted but to persons of distinction.

+ *Quinta del Espiritu Santo*, “The Villa of the Holy Ghost,” is nothing more than a white-washed house of two stories, surrounded by an inclosure, at the distance of something more than two miles from Madrid. Citizens desirous of breathing a little fresh air, are in the habit of jaunting or walking out here on Sundays and holidays. The “*Diario*,” a most useful and valuable daily advertiser,

itself to the view, in all the pride of a capital. The immense Rotunda or Arena destined for the bull fights, being situated outside the walls on the right of the causeway, is, however, rather an eye-sore than an ornament, as it impedes the view and breaks in upon the harmonious line of buildings and public monuments in the distance, but still, the view, partial yet imposing, which is obtained through the trees and noble arches of the gate of Alcalà; the proud steeples that meet the eye, and close the long and magnificent alley of the

will inform you that you may dine there, at from four reals to twenty, with a full bottle of good Arganda wine and a desert into the bargain; and a postscript holds out to the epicure that he can indulge his pampered palate with *rico bacalado* (the rich ling fish) cooked after the fashion of Biscay; and *callos*, or tripe is also forthcoming. In the grounds is a round-a-bout for amateurs, and in front of this house a cock-pit, formed by a circle of iron pins fixed in the ground keeping down a net-work all round: seats are placed for the accommodation of the knowing ones. After reading an advertisement placarded in the streets, stating that on Sunday, besides the usual number of cocks, there will be produced a brace (the only hope of the establishment, in a parenthesis), one goes out quite cock-a-hoop to see the game. The cocks, whether they happen to be of a "certain

“Glorietta,” and Calle d’Alcalà, more than compensate this disadvantage, and fully gratify the expectations of the beholder.

The private gardens of the “Retiro,”* their pagodas, tower, and fantastic temple, also contribute to give an air of royalty to this entrance to which no other can pretend. From this spot to the Post Office, the traveller is impressed with a high idea of the Spanish metropolis. The fine trees that line the descent to the Calle Alcalà, the avenues of the *Prado* and *Recoletos*, the noble fountains which refresh and

Barcelona breed,” or not, are far too knowing for that. They are brought in by a fellow, carrying one under each arm, like an umbrella or a bundle of any sort, and pitched in over the netting. They pull each other about for a few minutes, quite in a gentle, friendly way, declining spurs for fear of hurting one another. They then apply themselves to picking any odd crumbs lying about, until relieved by another brace of combatants equally desperate. There are balls given here, also ; in short it is a very ‘snug lounge’ for a man who does not much care where he goes.

* *Retiro*, Retreat—the garden of that name.—See its chapter. *Prado*, the walk of that name—*idem*. *Recoletos*, Recolets—the convent of that order in the walk so called, forming one wing of the “*Prado*.”

adorn those shady retreats, farther on the truly royal street of Alcalà, probably one of the widest in Europe, form, altogether, a most varied and imposing picture.

Should chance or accident direct the stranger's steps, on his first visit to Madrid, by the Valencia road, the character of the scene is entirely changed, dwindling into a lonely and melancholy perspective, rendered doubly so by the recollection of the paradise he has left behind him at Aranjuez. With the freshness of the rich luxuriant shades and giant alleys watered by the Tagus, still present to his mind, he descries an outspread mass of gloomy earth-coloured buildings, rising in the form of an amphitheatre, their sloping roofs, covered with the dark grey tiles of the country, presenting, altogether, a mean and unseemly appearance. It is not until after he enters the gate of Atocha that his eye becomes reconciled to the objects around; the Prado, its groves and noble museum, assert their right to royalty and magnificence.

Though in nowise to be compared in point of grandeur to the entrance by the gate of Alcalà, that by the Segovian gate of San Vicenti is not

14 APPROACH TO MADRID BY THE VALENCIA ROAD.

devoid of interest and beauty. Few foreigners enter the capital by this road, which leads through Valladolid, Segovia, the village of Guadarrama, and the royal residence of the Prado.* Here, and along this road only, may the lover of green trees and refreshing waters hope to find them. The Florida, as this spot is so called, is indeed so in this country of sterility. The Mauzanares,† though shallow and of feeble current, is yet a running stream, and

* A magnificent royal residence, seven leagues from Madrid on the Toledo road. The contrast between the glorious vegetation of this beautiful valley of the Tagus, and the sterile neighbourhood of the capital, is too startling not to be well remembered by every traveller who has seen both.

† Notwithstanding this, modern wags have presumed to be witty at the expense of this modest stream, and Tirro de Molina imagines a dialogue between the river and himself, cracking an impertinent joke on its scanty waters, in the verses,

Como Alcalà y Salamanca,
Teneis, y no vais Colegio,
Vacaciones en Verano
Y curso solo en Invierno.

which hint, in plain terms, that, like the universities of Alcalà and Salamanca, although the river is no university, it has vacations in Summer, and courses only in Winter. The grave and worthy scholar and antiquary,

the trees which line its banks are in sufficient abundance to answer the double purpose of shade and landscape.

Master Nunez de Castro, triumphantly exclaims, “Let those who sneer at our river and absence of gardens and drives of sweet repose, deny that there is a river in Madrid for recreation without danger; and if not, let Heidelberg, court of the Count Palatine, so celebrated for its river Necker, or Frankfort, court of the Marquis of Brandenburg, famous for the cristals of the river Oder, or the city of Hale, throne of the Duke of Saxony, situated on the river Saale, or Cassel, metropolis of the Landgrave of Hesse, beautified by the waters of the Fulda, uphold that they enjoy more diversions in the neighbourhood of such large copious rivers, than does Madrid in the tempered currents of the gentle Mauzanares. A few boats, confided not without danger, to the inconstaney of the waves, make the navigation of other rivers delicious, while in that of Madrid, all coaches and carriages seem even as gondolas and small portable edifices, savoury imitation of the delights of Venice, which diversions and the soft zephyrs which the Mauzanares brings down from the mountains, makes the night appear but a breath. This truth all foreigners who are not blinded by an inordinate love of country must confess in full chorus.” So far Castro.—The river is as shallow as ever he could have wished it, but it is greatly to be regretted that the jaunting up and down the river should have been entirely abandoned for the vainer theatre of the Prado.

The vicinity of the snug little royal retreat of the Monelva* contributes to the sylvan aspect of this road, while, on drawing nearer to the gate of St. Vicente, the long rows of party-coloured garments, shirts and shifts, petticoats and pantaloons, hanging up to dry in peace and good fellowship, the songs of the women in their washing stands,† groups of mules with their tinkling bells, drowsy borricos and yokes of

* This little retreat was a favourite of Isabel of Braganza, the second wife of Ferdinand. It has nothing particular to recommend it, excepting the fine view it commands of the mountains of Guadarrama. There was formerly a manufactory of china here, worked on the king's account, but it is now given up. The park affords an agreeable evening drive to those who obtain leave to pass the gate. The house is very small, though tastefully fitted up.

† The practice of washing with hot water is almost unknown in Spain, and generally much less practised abroad than in England. In Madrid, all clothes go to the river. Covered washing sheds are conveniently placed along its banks, filled with women from day-break till night-fall. Any idler who is curious in such matters may, by descending to the gate of San Vicente, take in, at one glance, all the under garments of the inhabitants of Madrid, spread out to the sun and wind, on innumerable cords supported by poles on either side of the river.

oxen, lying around their creaking old-fashioned cars from the mountains ; the sharp lively clack of castanets, and the twang of guitars through the trees and along the river side ; the resounding steps of the romping manola and her chosen dancer,* drowned, ever and anon, in the roar of applause that bursts forth, when either party executes any extravagant or peculiarly ingenious combination of steps on one leg or both, do not fail to give to this shady resort a cheerful and animated air. The palace and its lofty foundations appear to great advantage when seen from below ; the avenue leading upward is also inviting ; but once on the *Plaza del Prado nuevo*, the houses again resume their mean irregular form, and the charm is at an end.

* See the chapter dedicated to this interesting portion of the fair sex.

CHAPTER II.

General Appearance of the Town, Streets, and Local
Peculiarities of Madrid.

THE interior of Madrid, with the exception of a very few streets and public buildings, by no means relieves the disappointment caused by the nakedness of its exterior. There is a comfortless look about the generality of the houses not recently built, which gives a very unfavourable impression, and a misgiving about the finding of a snug lodging, exceedingly tantalizing to a wayworn traveller. Although nearly every house has its balconies on the first and higher stories, which constitute the only liveable part of it during the African heat of a Madrid sum-

mer,* and, notwithstanding the consequent importance of such a post, the balconies seldom receive a fresh coat of painting, but exhibit the contrasts of rust and the action of the atmosphere in all their varieties. The mean appearance of the windows, glazed with little square

* The Summer heats are more oppressive in Madrid than in any other part of the kingdom. The absence of trees and water, its elevated position crowning a vast “Plateau” naked as the hand, combined with the calcareous chalky nature of the surface, expose it to the full action of a fierce sun. The evening seldom brings any alleviation; there is no cooling breeze at sunset to refresh the air; occasionally, to be sure, an awful thunder storm, like that of the tropics, breaks over the heads of the panting inhabitants, but without mitigating the intense warmth. The iron railings of the balconies are so impregnated with heat as to be unpleasant to the touch at midnight. The evil is remedied, as much as possible, by hanging thick linen curtains of various stripes and colours before the windows, covering at the same time the balconies. Quantities of water are also dashed upon the tiled roof and curtains, and afford a certain freshness. Here the evening party assembles to breathe a little more at their ease, and tell each other how hot it is. The variety of curtains hung out at almost every window, gives a singular and not unpleasing appearance to the streets —a large house, with all its canvass spread, is no bad representation of a line of battle ship in full sail.

panes of the worst description and varied hue, set in leaden grooves or lattices, the absence of paint, and the little care taken of the sashes and woodwork, augment the haunted look they have about them.

Many good housewives have also devised sundry ingenious contrivances, and additions to the enticing appearance of their balconies, by having pieces of wood fixed into the walls, on each side, with a small pulley in the outer part, through which running cords are passed and secured at either end. Stockings black and white, blue and grey, stomachers, handkerchiefs, and even ladies *panos menores* are there to be seen flaunting and toying in the wind, like so many gay pennons of knight or baron bold ; but prudently and firmly pinned to the cords, so as not to give any light-fingered passenger the opportunity of carrying them away, which would infallibly be the case, did any such relic fall into the street. Besides the satisfaction thus gratuitously afforded to the public of knowing that there is washing going on up stairs ; any curious person may also thereby readily ascertain whether the lady of the house has children, and

of what particular age they may happen to be. The different sizes of the frocks and pinafores basking in the sun, clear up the point satisfactorily.

Notwithstanding these great exertions on the part of the inmates to save outward appearances, the striking irregularity in the height of the houses is another unfavourable circumstance. It is not uncommon to see a wretched tumble-down looking house supporting itself against the palace of a grandee, displaying its chequered, moss-grown, weather-stained tiling in mockery of the marble and sculpture of its next-door neighbour ; as a loathsome beggar chuckles when he can rub his filthy garments against the silk of a *Lechugina*,* or *Levita* of a dandy. It is but justice, to state, however, that the houses now in the

* This word stands, in the literal sense for “lettuce.” *Levita*, a frock or morning coat. The origin of the term *Lechugino-na*, as applied to male and female dandies, is not very well authenticated. It is ascribed, however, to a witty countess, with great pretensions to dress and fashion, who, seeing an admirer of her’s decked out in “full fig” to subdue her heart, exclaimed “ Only look at him—he looks, dear man, as fresh as a *lechuga*.”

course of erection would not disgrace any metropolis, although their interior distribution is on too small a scale, not so much to suit the convenience of the occupant, as the avarice of the proprietor, whose object is evidently to cram the greatest number possible of tenants in the smallest possible space.

The quarters of Madrid, known under the name of the *Rastro*, and “*Barrios bajos*,” present a most unwholesome and ungainly appearance ; being chiefly composed of hovels with mud walls and tiled roofing, which contain but a ground-floor, and are inhabited by the dregs of the population ; they are the purlieus of vice and crime, and are not only a disgrace to the capital, but would be so to any sixth-rate town in the kingdom.*

* The great disparity so remarkable in the buildings of Madrid, may be accounted for, by calling to mind the capricious way it commenced its importance as a capital. It struggled on, a secondary town, until the Emperor Charles V., suffering under a severe fit of the ague, which he had caught in Valladolid, then the royal residence, came to Madrid for change of air, and recovered ; in consequence of which he was induced to reside here ever after. Philip II. decided its prosperity by ultimately making it the seat of

The same discrepancy prevails in the style and mode of living of the nobility and wealthier classes : everything is in extremes, both in houses, equipages, clothing, eating and drinking. Luxury and misery, comfort and squalidness, are constantly elbowing one another. The inhabitants also bear a strong stamp of quaint originality about them. Were a man transported blindfolded into Spain, and his bandage taken off when set down in Madrid, he might, on his first walk through the streets, readily believe himself in a seaport town, from the great variety of costumes, European, Oriental, Spanish,—and many partaking of all three, which he would be constantly meeting.

The *Valencian*, with his gay-coloured handkerchief rolled about his head in the Moorish

the court. Still, it was augmented by bits and scraps, as a building mania came on, or as the times permitted. For many many years have elapsed since this unhappy country has enjoyed even a short period of tranquillity. She will long bear the marks of the chains which have bound her limbs and crippled her energies, and, if latterly she has made some advances towards civilization, she owes it to an awakening feeling of herself and of her rights, which may yet put her in the road to prosperity.

fashion, a brilliantly striped *manta* thrown gracefully over his shoulder ; the *Maragato*, looking for all the world like a well-fed Dutch skipper in flesh and costume ; the man of *Estremadura*, his broad buff belt buckled about his loins, and a string of sausages in his hand ; the *Catalonian's* wild Albanian look and cut, a red woollen cap falling on his shoulder in the way of the Neapolitan mariners ; the *Andalusian's* elegant dress, swarthy face, and immeasurable whiskers ; *Galicia's* heavy, dirty son, dragging after him, at every step, a shoe weighing from two to three pounds, including nails, doublings, and other defences against a treacherous and ruinous pavement.

All these people might easily be taken for the inhabitants of regions hundreds of leagues asunder, differing as essentially in language as in costume. The effect produced on a stranger by such a cosmopolite looking crowd, is such, (had he not been jolted incessantly in an indifferently hung carriage for several days, as to remove all doubt from his mind of travelling on *terra firma*,) as to make him fancy that all those picturesque looking people have just disem-

barked from various parts of the globe, to transact business and shew off their toilet.

A walk up to the *Retiro* will, however, soon convince him that he is arrived in a capital, surrounded, on an average, by one hundred leagues of land on every side, and the earth immediately under his eye as parched and naked, and removed from dampness as any lizard could desire.

Take them altogether, the streets of Madrid have not the least point of resemblance with those of any other European capital,—just as little as the great majority of the people walking about them bear to the inhabitants of Paris, London, or Vienna. The *Calle Alcalá* is, no doubt, a very fine street, possessing a splendid public monument, the Custom House, and many private houses are of an elevated order of architecture; this does not prevent its being the street of Madrid which presents most anomalies. There, as every body knows, there are no areas to the houses as in London. The lower part being entirely destined to lumber rooms, or wine vaults, or general receptacles for any thing and every thing. Nobody dreams of living under

ground : as they say themselves, *that* will come in due time and long before they could wish ; the ground floors having windows towards the street, are secured, like those of a prison, with thick iron bars pretty closely set together, an appearance that gives no very favourable idea of the watchfulness of the police or the honesty of the citizens. This precaution, which elsewhere would scare everybody from taking such a well defended citadel, produces no such effect among the natives. They are quite as much sought after as any other story, and, indeed, preferred by many, on account of their coolness in summer. They possess, also, the advantage of giving fair play to the man of imagination and quaint fancies. For, when such quarters are inhabited by pretty girls, who are always at their windows, looking through the bars like chickens out of a hen-coop, a poetic character might well transport himself to those barbarous periods when beauty was restrained by bars and bolts, requiring and imploring the aid of chivalry to the rescue. Such “Peris,” be they ever so soft and languishing and beautiful, have often to do with fathers or mothers who do not understand non-

sense, or husbands as jealous as tigers ; in fact, are looked after with a solicitude which they could altogether dispense with. As for myself, they always put me in mind, poor things ! of Yorick's starling—"I can't get out," said the poor bird. The well fringed, speaking eyes of those dear *Ninas*, look *at* you and *through* you as you are passing, envying your powers of locomotion, and sighing all the while as plain as eyes black, or blue, or grey, and all with prodigious long eyelashes, can sigh—"We can't get out ! we can't get out ! Caballero ! we can't get out—although dying to do so !" I don't know how it is, but I take so much to heart every thing relating to the sex of the above description, and not past five-and-twenty, that I have more than once formed the project of never going to ramble about the streets without a good file in my pocket, so as to let myself in, or them out, just as fate and circumstances should ordain it. But, eheu ! I am forgetting that sundry winters, more than is befitting or tellable even to the "Gentle Reader," have been busy powdering my head with snow, and doing all they can to freeze the philoganic current of my blood ! But

I had best leave this topic, this gossip, which shew my years as clearly as my *fé de bautismo*—and take again to the streets.

Besides the above peculiarity, this street of Alcalá is famous for its *osterias* (hostelries), the resting places of a numerous gang of *arrieros* (muleteers) and *ordinarios* (regular carriers to and from the various principal towns). You step out of a palace, and enjoy, next door, the grateful smell of horse-dung, the picturesque and energetic dialogues of the aforesaid tribe, the tinkling of the bells round the mules' necks, as they move about in their stables, while three or four huge dogs, with an iron collar stuffed with nails defending their throats, are stretched out upon the threshold pretending to be asleep, merely waiting for a pretext to give you a good shaking. Two or three *manolas* contribute to harmonize this picture, wrangling in the ample gateway about the generosity or fidelity of their *queridos*, upon hints received that the wench of some *posada* on the road has succeeded in overturning the constancy of their "man." A strong odour of well pitched wine-skins increases the enjoyment of the passenger, who thinks he has escaped as he passes before

seemly houses and handsome shops, until he finds himself stopped by a crowd of jolly dogs, rolling out of a *despacho de vino* (a drinking-shop), next door to a jeweller's. A little further on is a *trinda de comestibles* (provision-shop), where you may see the portly mistress, or greasy master of the establishment, enshrined amidst festoons of sausages, flitches of fine fat bacon, piles of chocolate, cheese, quarters of lamb or kid, according to the season, all hung up and disposed in goodly array. Here, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, from the general or marquis,* down to the

* In Spain, we live on from day to day, ever putting into practice the scriptural injunction, “our loins are ever girt, and ready for the road.” Few, indeed, are the houses that lay in a prudent store of eatables, if we except an odd bag of the faithful and every-day *garbanzo*, *ditto* of white beans, and other dry vegetables, with a *tinaja* or so of oil, such worldly foresight is never heard of. People of rank and good income live on whatever the next victual-shop affords, taking so much of each article as is sufficient for the day's consumption. Let no hungry man, just off' a journey, and high trotting nag, ever think of dropping into a friend's to refresh; anything, cold beef, ham, &c. Vain dreams! A cup of chocolate, in which his thumb would be ill at ease, or by some strange accident, a couple of fried eggs, is all

shoemaker, procure their ingredients for the *puchero*, their oil and vinegar for the salad, the saffron for those who like it, although this good old custom of besaffroning every thing is, thanks be to God, going out of use. Here

he can hope for, and be thankful, especially for the eggs. Once the dinner brought, and the salad and small portion of meat put aside for the *guisado*, (the standing supper dish,) Santimas Pas quas! most holy Easter to you! No waste—no larder; and if any accident or voracious cat (I hate cats) destroys the evening prospects, a crust of bread and *dos dedos de vino*, and into bed, until a fresh Aurora and fresh supply shine upon and gladden mortals. Neither do we choose the trouble and fuss of a wine cellar; besides, keep the key where you will, the servants (especially if there be an Arragoneze among them) will get at it, or into the vault and cask too, if necessary. How much more comfortable it is to get your pint or two of wine from the neighbouring tavern; it comes in nice and hot from the juicy hands of the bearer, besides the variety of tasting a new vintage every day, or, what is still more to be prized, a mixture of all, swallowing it with the satisfaction of knowing that the bottle “has been shook,” according to the advice of the best apothecaries. I feel an honest pride in being able to assert, that, out of fifty large wine growers, there are not two who think of indulging in a good glass of wine, but get it from the tavern. All classes do pretty much the same.

is to be had the *cuatro cuartos* of black pepper or cinnamon for the *arroe con leche*; the dish of rice-milk, as thick as porridge, a “*postre*” much rejoiced in. You may also get a few *guindillas*, as red as fire, and still hotter, if possible, to “*abrir el apetito*” (to open your appetite), with *pimientos*, red and green; and, above all, the news and gossip, and scandal of the neighbourhood: who pays, and who does not pay; the different ups and downs of the street; and if any “*matrimonio*” (married couple) is at sixes and sevens—people caught under the bed, and so forth. Indeed, to do the *tenderos* justice, in point of information, and being communicative chatty people, they beat the *barberos* hollow.*

* The race of Figaros, like other great dynasties, after being, from time immemorial, in undisputed possession of “chat” and the razor, is now under a cloud, which has nearly extinguished its ancient lustre; not, indeed, that it is going out, as Prince Talleyrand said not long ago of a republican leader, “comme une vieille chandelle, qui s’extinct et pue,” but, rather, that its importance has diminished by the innumerable farthing rushlights allowed to figure in its train. Every *estudiante* now-a-days, adds the gift of shaving to his other accomplishments and means of

The street we are describing is built, as all the world must be aware, upon a gradually ascending ground, so that, when we reach the Custom House, we command the view on either side, towards the Prado, or the “Puerta del Sol.” In this advantageous position, are to be found knots of stout fellows, rolled up in their cloaks, some, *em borados* up to the eyes, others, contenting themselves with giving the ample folds a knowing jerk under the left

feeding his foodlorn carcase. Many *valets de chambre* brandish the razor with impunity, not to mention the independent people who presume to lay hands upon themselves. The light foot, nimble tongue, and taste for intrigue, and doing neighbourly services to young ladies and gentlemen, have abandoned the present degenerated race. They are mere machines,—shave in their shops (known by the helmet of Membrino swinging over the door,) for four cuartos to six, according to the edge of the instrument, and know nothing, absolutely nothing, not even the particulars of the last night’s row in the *Rastro*. Not so the proprietors of the eating shops, nought escapes their notice; they make mistakes purposely in the weights to begin over again until the story is told; even an old one becomes in their mouths, and imparted to their motley customers, a fact worthy the attention of their respective masters and mistresses, whence it travels to the *tertulia*, and, not unfrequently, rests itself in the palace for the night.

arm, all differently engaged, smoking or talking, but keeping a sharp look-out up and down the street; to judge by their bluff faces and flourishing whiskers, the conic termination of the hat, with a tuft of black silk adorning the top and one side of the upturned brim, not to mention the broad band of black velvet which nearly covers the whole concern, and the thick cigar stuck in the corner of the mouth, one might fancy they were *hacendados*, of Andalusia, come to town on a frolic, or *chalanes* (horse-jockeys) from Cordova, with a string of incomparable coursers; their gaily embroidered waistcoats, or jackets, shining out from an opening in the *capa*, and the shewy silk kerchief about their necks, fastened by a golden ring in front, might even induce the observer to suspect they belonged to titled fathers, and the *grandeza*, could such athletic forms and thews and sinews adorn that puny race. Not one of these suppositions, however, comes near the truth; they are simply industrious lads, of a high spirit, who prefer the *trabajo* and sabre to any more mechanical instruments. They assemble, morning and evening, at the usual hours of departure and arri-

val of wayfaring people ; they note down, with care, their comings in and goings out, and find means of ascertaining pretty exactly the sum of worldly riches they carry about them ; afterwards, like zealous apostles, they sally forth as “fishers of men,” to despoil such travellers of goods to which they may be perniciously attached, so far as regards the good of their souls ; in short, they are *caballeros ladrones* (robber cavaliers), exercising their honest independent calling in the best way they can ; taking care, however, to observe that attention and respect towards their friends, the “*alguaciles*,” which is, after all, but good-breeding, and singularly conducive to their longevity, and the prosperity of their trade.*

* The connivance of the police with the “gentlemen of the road” is too old a fact to require dwelling upon. There is, perhaps, not one *alguacil*, or constable, who is not in their pay—(woe to the contributors if the means fail them !)—hence it is an axiom among thieves, not to mind the *act* of robbing,—that is a matter of course,—but to be most particular as to *what* they rob. A man who eases a neighbour of a dollar or two, will infallibly be strangled by the *garote* (*hanging* is now out of fashion), or be sent to the galleys, according to the circumstances of the crime ; because in such a trifle there is nothing

The *Calle de Montera* is, doubtless, the street, or Rue Vivienne of Madrid, for here you find concentrated the greatest and most brilliant shops in the capital, of all sorts and descriptions. Here, too, ladies are seen in crowds, tormenting the shop-boys, turning every thing upside down, and making very few and slender purchases, either because their husbands are stingy, ill-natured brutes, who will not give them *dinero*, or *que no hay*, that much buying does not exist. Whatever may be the cause, it is certain that it is not the least want of strong desire to buy, which engenders this economy in female breasts. Notwithstanding the display, the same characteristic peculiarities prevail in this street as in its less opulent neighbours. Many is the time we have seen a well-frizzed, dapper shop-boy getting into a passion, and obliged to jump over the counter in order to eject and pursue an obstinate hen with her chickens from the next door *meson* of the *gallina*. It is by no means un-

worthy the pocket of an alguacil; let him rob a round sum,—a few hundred dollars, or thousands, if he can,—he is sure of living a joyous life of it, honoured and respected by his white-wanded guardians.

common for a lady driving a hard bargain in a mercer's shop, resplendent with rich brocades, lovely silks, and delicate ribbons, to be interrupted and startled by a sound peck at her little foot from a sauntering turkey-cock just "dropped in" from the stable, and posada of the *Gallega*, opposite, which has mistaken the small rosette upon her shoe for something good, or observing what is going on with the musical note and upcast inquisitive eye peculiar to this savoury bird.* I leave to an abler pen than mine, the description of the "rows" constantly occurring between the numerous dogs, with and without masters, that are in the habit of giving each other a general rendezvous opposite the church of San Luis, after gleaned the refuse of the neighbouring market-place of "El Carmen." As they are very numerous, and of all casts and conditions, it is natural there should exist a considerable

* The apparent improbability of such loungers in fine shops and thronged streets, disappears on considering the advantages to be reaped from allowing poultry to roam about the stables and kitchens of the numerous traders in this street; after which, they pass their time "visiting," like other town's-folk.

divergency of opinions among them on most subjects. This produces, at first, something between a growl and a whimper, improves into a display of fiery eyes and rows of very sharp white teeth; and, at last, things proceed to such lengths, that no decent dog can put up with it. Hence a general *melée* and running fight, the flagway being always selected by the old hands as affording most chance of a slip to an unwary adversary. When the pursuit becomes hot, and they are hard pushed, they bolt into the shops, on the old sailor principle of "any port in a storm," and there "fight it out," shamefully regardless of the fright and screams of the ladies, the swearing of the shop-boys, and the cudgels of the beggars, fixtures at the door, who hope to pocket a few extra cuartos by so seasonable a display of vigour on—*costillas agenas*—(other people's ribs).

I say nothing of the "Galeras,"* arriving

* The *Galera* is a long and somewhat narrow cart: the sides formed of a stout wooden railing lined with a mat of "Ejparto," going all round, to keep the cold and wet and dust out from those within; the bottom is usually made of stout cords, interlaced as a network, not excluding, how-

from the country or departing, or loading before the gateways of the posadas; it is a *rus in urbe* with a vengeance. Their matted awnings, mud-clodded wheels, and clumsy drags, wild-looking mules and drivers, the misanthro-

ever, the wooden frame necessary to the security and strength of the carriage; underneath is suspended a sort of hammock, where more luggage can be stowed, and where the driver usually enjoys his nap. A square box, swinging in the rear, is destined for the “ease” of the huge mastiff, the *fidus Achates* of the whole concern, generally gifted with as repulsive a physiognomy as his master can desire. When the load is stowed away, the remaining space between the bales, boxes, and awning, (in winter a tarpaulin, in summer a description of sail-cloth,) is allotted for the accommodation of passengers, who generally bring their mattresses with them, to serve as a sofa during the day, or a bed by night, whenever a full *Venta*, or the threatening appearance of its beds induce fastidious travellers to avoid feeding the hungry with their own flesh and blood. It is by no means a disreputable mode of travelling; persons of great respectability, both male and female, adopt this mode of transferring themselves from one point to another. The *Mayoral* or *Razal*, (or carrier,) is generally a trustworthy respectable man, well known along his road. He is treated with much greater respect in the ventas, or inns, than any isolated pilgrim, however great a man he may be, or fancy himself. Then he is an old acquaintance of the mounted banditti, if such company keep in his line; he

pic dog posted between the wheels, and the iron pot lashed on behind, contrast strangely with the smart equipages of the fashionable, and tell loudly of bad roads, and plains, and uninhabited regions, requiring both food and

either pays them a fixed contribution to be protected against all other violence, or they content themselves with a moderate impost on his passengers as belonging to a friend. When not pressed for time, a stranger will find it far from disagreeable, as he has leisure to see the country, the rate of travelling being usually from six to eight leagues a day, rising very early in the morning, and creeping onwards until near dusk ; all the stages are regulated, and the arrival expected as regularly as that of the Diligence. When one has the good luck to fall in with agreeable companions, male or female, or both, (and, in justice to Spaniards be it said, nowhere are people more disposed to be accommodating and social than they are on such occasions,) a journey of a hundred leagues, requiring ten to fourteen days, passes away pleasantly enough, and affords a large field for curious observation in the halts at night, amid the *tertulia* gathered round the great kitchen chimney ; everybody takes his place where he finds it, pell-mell. In our manners, as I believe I before said, we are downright republicans. The fares are reasonable : that from Madrid to Valencia, for instance, in the "Mensageria," is twelve dollars, or sixty francs, bed and board included, the journey being performed in seven to eight days. Extra luggage is paid for at the rate of about eight francs per cwt.

kitchen to travel with, as in the caravan of Bussora, or that destined to transport the faithful to the shrine of the prophet.

If the form of government has hitherto been despotic, nobody can deny the habits of the people to be altogether republican. Who else but a man of that sturdy way of thinking would attempt to set up his sign of an old boot, suspended by a piece of twine from a stick fixed in the wall, or jammed in between the wood-work of a door, next to some gaudy sign-board, all over gilding and paint, representing St. Jago, the invincible patron of Spain, mounted on his white horse, and looking as desperate as may become so great an apostle, while he makes short work of numberless devils and serpents, with forked tongues and curly tails? The number of those independent *maestros* (tradespeople), of all sorts, tailors, shoemakers, jewellers, *Eau de Cologne*, needle, pin, stocking, and button venders, who take possession of the *portales* (entries) of houses, and establish themselves and stock in trade in the passages, is so considerable, as to form a floating population in itself. This custom is so general, that the advertisements in the

diario, setting forth any object to be seen or sold in such a direction and house, generally end with “the shoemaker in the entry will *dar razon* (explain matters)”. It has been more than once a speculation of mine how to account for the universal gaiety and decided turn for singing, whether blessed with a voice or not, which has taken possession, from time immemorial, of all cobblers. Whether it consist in the extreme independence which a total want of anything like property gives, and the buoyancy of spirit consequent on having nothing to take care of, except the lacerated soles of their customers—whether communicated by a special virtue or exhalation rising from the earthen vessel at their feet, full of half-putrid water and old heel taps, or by that undisputed right, which they largely use, to apply the strap to the persons of their helpmates on all occasions, so as to have established as an axiom, that no spouse is half so dutiful, or kept in such good order as a cobbler’s; how so great a focus of mental sunshine is brought to illuminate a damp and darkling passage, I have never been able satisfactorily to determine. But there you will

find them, seated in a current of air which would give the tooth-ache, or a fit of rheumatism to anybody else, enjoying themselves, with their shirt-collars open, and generally preferring wearing “their hair” to any other invention. Should you lodge in the same house, and have no servant, or not wish to be at the expense of one, this merry individual will not only mend your *caleados*, but clean them for you every morning, and brush your clothes into the bargain, for the round sum of twenty reals a month. He will also undertake an odd message, for a very slender increase of salary; and, as he is commonly as thin as a whipping-post, he goes over the ground like a greyhound, as he tells you himself; proving eminently useful from his local knowledge, as well as negotiating any delicate business with an innate and truly diplomatic tact.

The “set out” of the other members of this confraternity so hostile to shop-rents,* though

* But few of this nomade tribe pay for their stand, unless the passage be so spacious, or offer so snug a niche as to admit of fixtures being placed there without impeding the thoroughfare. In this case, some very small retribution is expected. The occupants of the narrower entries are looked

not quite so simple as the “ cobblers,” is soon put to right. They fix a few hooks in the wall, and hang thereto their shew shelves, which double up like a backgammon board, a cross-legged support beneath completes the shop. The owners range themselves on one side, just allowing room enough to pass, and ply their trade from eight in the morning until dusk. Their meals are cooked alongside their merchandise ; a little iron tripod to hold a few live embers, an earthen *puchero* fitting upon it, comprehend their kitchen utensils. A few beans or *garbauros* and a slice of lard, boiled together, gives them a soup and an *olla*, reinforced with bread. The more easy in their circumstances add a salad and wine.

The “ guild” of tailors generally provide themselves with a folding screen, which forms a temporary inclosure, and serves, at the same time, as a

upon rather as benefactors and guardians than otherwise. The lodgers of the house make use of them as a suisso or porter, to receive their friends’ visiting cards when out, to say “ not at home,” &c. &c. and many other little services, which are looked upon as repaid by a franc or, at most, two a month. They are also considered as valuable scare-crows for thieves, who seldom attempt a “ job” with such observing neighbours near them.

counter on which to display second-hand clothes for sale, or the *prendas* confided to their hands for renovation. The whole family unite for work and meals during the day, retiring to sleep in some aerial *guardilla*, during the night. All these philosophers keep up the dignity of their calling, and by no means suffer themselves to be cast down in spirit, or brow-beaten by more opulent artists. Their prices are generally, in the long-run, more exorbitant than regular tradesmen pretend to. Some of them affect foreign notions and travelled airs, placing a *letrero* or *aviso* to the public in the door way, with *Paris fashions—Tailor from Paris*, in large letters. I recollect a shopless wire-twister in Reu de St. Luis, who was so impressed with his own importance, that he hung out in legible characters over the door-way, *A qui esta' la fabrica de escobillas para el Ejercito*—(Here is the Manufactory of Pan brushes for the army!)

There are also other branches of ambulatory industry, generally in the hands of old women, or good-looking girls, who seat themselves in a range near some thoroughfare, to shape and sell tooth-picks, ordinarily made of orange or cherry wood, at four cuartos for twenty or thirty.

They also know all that is passing, and are very serviceable and obliging in their way. Certainly, there is no place in the world where a man may have so many different emissaries and scouts for so little money as he can at Madrid. They are all active and intelligent, and worthy of their hire. Besides the inhabitants of Madrid, who thus besiege and profit by every spare nook, there are auxiliaries from abroad, such as country people who have come with loads of corn or other productions requiring their stay. Once their business dispatched, they begin to think of dining, and as they always carry their *puchero* with them, they buy their bread and whatever else they choose to eat, and turn into the first unoccupied *portal* they find, squat down, like Arabs, in a corner, protected from the wind, soon get their charcoal lit, and cook their dinner. This over, they spread their *mantas* on the ground, lay hold of any stone or piece of wood they can find, to answer for a pillow, and take their *siesta* very comfortably. An hour sees them again on their feet, the *mantas* are rolled up, or thrown across the shoulder, the *puchero* is stuffed into the bag formed by one end of this blanket,* off

* No Arab, Wach'abee, Kirse, or any other wanderer over the face of the earth, can be more indifferent about his

they march to their homes or occupations, full sure that they must be hard pushed indeed not to find an equally snug resting place wherever they direct their steps. The number of this singular tribe of migratory shopkeepers accounts for the rapidity with which a crowd is formed in resting place, than the Spanish peasant. He travels with his whole paraphernalia of comforts about him. The *manta*, a various coloured woollen blanket, about four feet wide by eight feet long, serves him as cloak and bed, house and home; one end is doubled and sewn up about a third of the whole length, forming a bag for the feet in cold weather on horseback, (the peasant seldom rides with saddle, but seated sideways on their packs), or for the head when on foot, or wherein to stow provisions, a spare shirt, a *puchero*, or any other little delicacy for the road. They have a peculiar knack of rolling themselves up in the *manta*, protecting most effectually all the more interesting portion of their persons from wind or rain, while a novice would get a surfeit of both with the same means of defence. They make another use of this snug wrapper, which is Arab from beginning to end. When occupied on business that calls them away from their ass, or horse, or mule, they muffle the head of the animal in a moment with their *manta*, in two or three folds, the rest drooping gracefully to the ground. This produces a very odd effect, as if they were so many headless horses with bandages to prevent further hemorrhage. It answers the end proposed most fully, viz. preventing the animal from straying.

the streets of Madrid. If the least novelty occur, the gaping passengers are immediately reinforced by the tenants of all the neighbouring passages, who, having no stairs to descend, nor doors to open and shut, are at your service in a trice ; men passing their lives in public, to whom all the vicissitudes of a thronged street are “tortas y pan pintads (tarts and gingerbread.)” Blind guitar players with their squalid family often meet the eye in this capital, some of whom sing better than could be expected from their destitute appearance. They perform many of their national *tonadillas* and *seguidillas* agreeably enough, and sure to have a full audience in a moment. The first thrums of the guitar have scarcely time to echo through the neighbourhood, before idlers (among whom may be especially remarked, our friends of the passage), flock around to listen, to the great annoyance of the coachmen driving past, whose course is impeded by the mass. No sooner do the unfortunate musicians come upon the finishing couplets, and animate their voice with the hope of retribution from so many *afriionados*, it must be admitted, to the disgrace of the audience, that they all simultaneously take the hint, and drop off by

half dozens at a time, the passage tenantry disappearing like a flight of sparrows, so that when the hat goes round, it encounters but “thin air,” or the elbow of some passenger in a hurry.*

* The lower classes in Spain are passionately fond of music. Few are totally ignorant of drawing sounds, more or less uncouth, from the guitar, or the more antique and classic *vihuela*, a round, plump-bodied, old-fashioned, stringed instrument, emitting a sharp peevish note, and played with a sort of *plectorum*, the delight of the villagers and their bouncing partners. The guitar, however, has superseded its rival in all the great towns, unless some blind Orpheus rashly renew s the ancient feuds as he passes on his monotonous pilgrimage through town and country. The busiest tradesman brushing past, and elbowing everybody to arrive the sooner, gradually slackens his pace as he hears the thrum, thrum, of the guitar. If a violin and two or three voices complete the snare, his seduction is inevitable. A crowd gathers round the performers, praise their execution liberally, but keep a wary eye on their hats—at the first indication of one being taken off, each affects an absent indifferent air, and slinks away, conscious of his “bilk.” The musicians do not always beg their reward in a lugubrious tone. I remember a wag coming round, (for I never could in my best days, prevent myself from pushing into every crowd, listen to every ballad, and above all, from attending every exhibition of Punch and Judy punctually), who had recourse to another form of petition—“Here, Senores, for our sakes, throw a few cuartas, into the hat, to

One of the most remarkable features of Madrid is the predominance of large convents in the best situations and best streets, often monopolising more space than should reasonably fall to their share. The fronts of the “holy houses” extend themselves wide up or down the street, causing a dead blank, and producing a blemish in the general effect, destroying the symmetry of the *calle*, and putting one strongly in mind of those stout, selfish, and ill-natured gentlemen, often to be met with in a public carriage, who, after ascertaining that no

enable us to perform a *novenas* of *capones* (fat capons) to the most holy christ of the *Trayadero* (the gullet), to empty a few bottles in honour of our lady *de la sed* (of thirst)— and sundry other irreverent allusions of the same kind. The humour of it brought him a larger supply than any invocation of holier patrons could have done. But as I also dropped a two-cuarto piece into the ragged crown, I could not help telling my friend of his claims to a stake and pitched barrel, if ever the holy office should again come to purify the faith. Two or three singing confraternity have seized upon the young queen Isabel and her smiling duleet mother, as their lawful prize;—a few choice couplets adroitly interlarded with “Immortal Christian,” “Innocent Isabel,” and “Valiant Urbanos” received the *vivats* in abundance of an audience determined on being patriotic *gratis*.

fellow traveller is a match for them, keep all the glasses down, if a cold night, or up, if a hot day, merely because they choose to do so, regardless of the intreaties of the pygmies about them. This monotonous appearance is, however, frequently agreeably relieved by the close-shaven polls of some of the “fathers” appearing at the little windows of their cells, and descending to look upon what is passing in the world. It is not a little striking, after sating the sight with the throng of well-dressed men and women, of shewy equipages, and still more shewy belles within them, to raise one’s eyes and behold the various countenances of these “anchorites” peering down upon you—some fat, ruddy, and shining, others pale and sallow, with strong black beards, and flashing eyes, as if in the act of calculating the use that you and yours should be turned to ; how to convert a greater portion of your temporalities to their advantage and that of the convent, all *ad majorem Dei gloriam!* Or, perhaps, that earnest look may be sent after the supple form of some passing nymph, devouring her charms from afar ; for we know that holier and better men have had tough work of it, even in the desert,

and on roots and water, to resist the instigations of Satan, and triumph over the “flesh;” what then must be the “strivings” of their successors who, to make victory doubly glorious, comfort their inward and sinful man with all sorts of dainties, rich chocolate, cakes, and liquors ?

A curious observer, with the aid of a good glass, may tranquillize himself as to the mortifications undergone by the brotherhood. He will discover the existence of an ample dark green bottle of amphoric form, vulgarly called a “*Donna Juana*,” reposing on the window-stools during the cool of the morning and evening, to mellow and ripen and call forth the perfume of the *Supernaculum* contained within it.*

* Besides the “generous stuff,” frequently the produce of the abbey vineyards, the brothers receive little presents of bodily comforts from their admirers, usually females. Though the sun of monkery is rapidly setting, still, some bosoms are to be found filled with charity toward its followers. A few quartillos of racy old wine are sent by the penitent or devotee, to enable the father to bear up under his evangelical load, and wash down the delicate biscuits, supplied from the same channel. This precious liquor is proudly cared for; now deepening its rosy hue in the sun, now mellowing in the shade, exposed either on

The “nunneries,” in point of usurping place and selecting the most frequented quarters of the town, yield in nothing to the male convents. There are no less than three of them in the Calle Alcalà, perched in the very midst of the thoroughfare to and from the Prado. The “sisters” take care to have a considerable number of latticed windows towards the street, whence they may see without being seen, and make their remarks upon their ill-advised sex struggling as well as they can against the snares of the “siglo” and dressing at the men in order to endanger their reputation. Any particularly devout nun has also a fair chance of warming her devotion with the sight of some well-made cavalier, who, on foot or horseback, passes under her window ; for if he pleases her, she never fails comparing him to the portrait of her favourite saint; whether it be the rosy St. Anthony, or the more delicate and senti-

the sitting stool of the cell window, or suspended from it. Nothing in this world, however hateful, is bereft of all sympathy ; this selfish race “*ingorda y crudel conaglia*,” if we are to believe Ariosto, still counts some attachments, some proofs of gratitude, reminding us of the unknown hand that scattered flowers on Nero’s tomb.

mental St. Louis Gonzaga;* in this pleasant way soothing her virgin fancy, and saving a

* Donna Rita, an elderly lady and old acquaintance, who had an early hankering after the cloister, and would certainly have deprived the world of her many virtues, (among which an intimate knowledge of all her neighbours' concerns is not the least conspicuous), had not a particular friend of hers, a young lady brought up in the same family, insinuated that such a step was the result of despair of getting a husband. To prove the falsehood of this assertion, she has remained a spinster all her life; she has always, however, been on the best terms with several abbesses and sisterhoods; they even allow her to enter the forbidden precincts on great feast-days,—a rare privilege and only conceded to a great benefactress of the convent, or some eminently useful and agreeable acquaintance, such as Donna Rita. Through this channel I have come by some curious miscellanies respecting them, i. e. when the old lady is in one of her good humours,—a circumstance by no means diurnal,—she, like most secret discreet characters, prefacing all her stories with, “This, you know, is strictly between ourselves”—it would require an experience of conventional life as great as my venerable friend's, to believe the schisms and bickerings, and gossiping and tattling going forward in the mystic recesses of the cloister;—a cake sent in to a sister by the wheel, and not scrupulously and equally divided among *all* the recluses, even were each to receive but a thimbleful; the allowing one a chair while the rest were standing, or permitting the indulgence of a stool with a back to it, to one sister when the others

soul, by offering up, as she is sure to do, a morning and evening orison for his salvation. These celestial spouses, as they call themselves, are, notwithstanding, very troublesome neighbours; for they, and their jealous old abbess, are so chary of being seen, even when walking in their garden, that, not contented with running

were obliged to wait upon themselves; occasion long and desperate feuds. But the tenderer hearts, more headlong blood, and lively imaginations of the juvenile portion of the nuns, induce them to quarrel and split upon subjects connected with more heart-stirring and pleasing reveries. They have each their favorite male saint—pore over his life, and still more over his picture; there are luckily so many “holy men” of all hues and colours, and calibres, that each fancy meets with its *desideratum*. The gentler spirits, those more given to contemplation, and, perchance to too-late repinings, are divided between the courteous and compassionate St. Francis de Sales, or the more impassioned and enthusiastic St. Luis Gonzaga. Besides the great advantage which the latter has of being by far the youngest of the saints on record, the fact of his heart being so inflamed with the celestial passion, as to cause flames to issue from it, to the great risk of his linen, (see his life,) turns the balance almost always in his favour. Each vestal is most jealous of her saint—they discuss their respective merits, and quarrel over the matter with the greatest earnestness and devotion.

up a wall twenty feet high at least, and spoiling a whole street, they insist on doing the same service to all the houses which have the misfortune to be within eye-shot of them. Thus, gentlest reader, whenever you go to Madrid, and see whole balconies completely boxed up with sheet iron, opposite a long dead wall, with a few ascetic looking cypresses peeping over it (something in the way of an Eastern Seraglio, though not half so gay), instead of opening your eyes and mouth, and wondering at it, set down in your tablets that you are fringing "holy precincts" not to be profaned by curious eyes. Still, as almost always happens, *el diablo pierde nada* (the devil loses nothing); for people are so ingenious and inventive, when told *not* to do a thing, that only a few days ago I detected a very nice girl squeezing her well-dressed little head between the wall and the sheet iron, at the risk of bruising her velvet cheek, to look with all her might into the forbidden garden,—a purpose which she fully accomplished. If they were doing any thing wrong that day, their only hope of concealment is in the proverbial discretion of all spinsters under eighteen.

Death and dangers, they say, walk about the streets of all large capitals, in the shapes of carriages, cabriolets, carts, runaway horses, beer-drays, rows, chimneys and tiles falling into the streets, and breaking people's heads and necks : but I flatter myself that we, citizens of Madrid, can add two inconveniences, if not downright perils, to the list. In the first place, the Spaniards deserve the epithet of *hippodomoi*,* fully as well as the Trojans ; for they do most things on horse-back, or mule-back, or ass-back. The very bread and meat you eat have the merit of being “ mounted ;” the bread you meet trotting through the streets, in large *capassos* (panniers) made of *esparto*, hanging on each side of the horse, with the jockey perched between them, pulling up at the door of his customers. This expeditious mode of distribution has

* I owe this word (Greek, I believe) to a young friend of mine, a student fresh from Salamanca. I have been all my life so busy with my wrangling eotemporaries, that I think as little of dead people as they of me. I beg to mention this, once for all, that all out-of-the-way quotations and allusions smelling like college are to be laid at the student's door. Thank God, I have always held books, ushers, and purgatory, as synonymous terms, and equally worthy of execration.

nothing disgusting or filthy about it, the panniers being very deep, almost touching the ground, and prevented by a short stick passed under the horse's belly from striking together, or impeding his march. The contents are sufficiently protected from wet and dust. The same cannot be said in favour of the plan followed with respect to the supply of butcher's meat, also hawked about *en poste*; quarters of beef, or as many as six sheep, on each side, are fixed by large iron hooks to the wooden pack-saddle, the rider disposing his own carcase as well as he can in the middle, his legs dangling on either side of the horse's neck to help him to preserve his equilibrium. In this trim, he rides off with his raw cargo, washed by the rain or parched and saturated with dust, as it may happen, an object of not less admiration and respect to all the strolling dogs in the neighbourhood through which he passes; in token of both, they generally accompany him the length of their street with their noses in the air, kept from a nearer inspection by the formidable look of the *Perro de Presa*, or Mallorca mastiff, which runs along chained to the meat-saddle, scowling from the corner of

his blood-shot eye on his new acquaintance, but taking particular pains not to get his toes trod upon as he goes along. I have more than once seen a lady's mantle unceremoniously laid hold of by a leg of beef, and the owner of the former whirled round and round, besides staining her finery.

Indignation is of but little use, the whole thing is done in a sharp trot ; before you cease spinning, or can get on your legs, if overturned, the man, and horse, and beef, and mastiff, are doing probably the very same thing in a distant quarter.*

This may be bad enough, but it is nothing compared to the second *susto* to which the foot-passengers in Madrid are subject. Who would not be under considerable astonishment and alarm at the clatter of many iron-shod feet coming in a rush towards him, the cause being absolutely concealed in an atmosphere of

* Such close contact may appear exaggerated to an English reader, but when informed of the extreme narrowness of the flag-way (from one to two feet broad, and on a level with the pavement) all improbability ceases, and, as the limbs of the animal point outwards, it is quite possible to entangle or overturn individuals of the crowd as the butcher's messenger scours along the skirts of it.

white dust, rendered more mysterious by the frequent bang of a stick on some very good conductor of sound? Such sensations will not be diminished when, like so many worthies of old, emerging from a cloud, appear from twenty to thirty large asses, in full gallop, observing no direct line, but always selecting the flag-way, to the great fright and discomfiture of the passengers; the young and less experienced *borricos* giving evident proofs of both by occasional somersets, very cleverly executed, not in the least impeding their speed, or bringing their persons within the reach of the resounding *vara* of the conductor. This despot is mounted on the most confidential and easy paced of the troop, seated within two or three inches of his tail, with a lime bag doubled under him; he wears a *gacho* (hat) with a high-coloured handkerchief tied beneath it, the corners floating in the wind behind; a vest of coarse yellow flannel, with sleeves of the same; a red sash round his waist. His eyes peering out of their lime-scorched sockets, as if very anxious to leave their resting-place, he directs the movements of the troop, sometimes by the voice, but

always, when he can overtake a loiterer, by means of a limber long rattan, which he brandishes with a vigorous arm. You have but a moment to make all these remarks; he appears and is past, fading in a cloud of lime-dust, shaken from the sides and bags of his asses by the help of his “garote,” keeping up the same desperate pace, dodging between horsemen and carriages, and overturning pedestrians, if not on the “look-out”—an errand of life or death!*

This charge of *borricos* would be still more formidable anywhere else; but we are here so accustomed to this useful animal, he is so

* But few carts or wheeled conveyances of any kind are used in the public or private establishments of Madrid; droves of mules and asses, with pack-saddles adapted to the kind of load they are to carry, perform the service of transport; their hire, like that of all other animals, persons, and things here, is entirely optional—more or less, according to the contract or stipulation. The labourer receives from five to eight reals a day. An ass, per diem, may be averaged at five reals to seven. The asses alluded to in the text, are employed from daylight to dusk transporting lime in bags from the “kilns,” outside the gate of Atocha; it is on the return, empty-handed, that “the rush” described takes place.

constant a companion on all our excursions and voyages, transporting our persons and goods, and eatables, that we have a fellow-feeling for him, and his well-shaven tail, and half-shorn hide. He appears perfectly to know it; he mixes freely in all crowds, and enjoys a sight as much as a Christian. You will be sure to find them looking on at the "fencing lessons," given in open air by famous "masters," who generally select the space before the Café of Santa Catalina, or near the fountain of Cybele, at the entrance of the walk of the Recoletos, for those ludicrous exhibitions. The "maestro," or, more truly, the "professor," brings with him a little table, covered with a green cloth, supporting a painting of the royal arms, an inscription beneath which informs the public of his licence to teach the "noble science of defence;" some old basket-hilted foils, with buttons nearly the size of an apple upon them, recline against the table in the guise of a trophy. There is no want of amateurs; exclusive of the steady animals above-mentioned, peasants, soldiers, and women soon form a crowded circle. The professor, a grave man, with a solemn air,

stands forth with an antique-fashioned Toledo rapier in his hand, and invites the *afzisionados* to have a bout,—from two to four cuartos, according to the time they employ. Then begins a rare exhibition of natural science and untutored skill. The professor only troubles himself, during the first onsets, in obliging the combatants to receive their arms with a becoming dignity and grace; their attempts to realize his wishes are well worth witnessing; each man thrusts and lunges at his antagonist as he may; their *pose* is beyond all description and praise, as well as their cunning sidling steps to make an inroad on the enemy. The professor is the most ignorant or most patient “master of arms” in existence; he looks on with imperturbable gravity; when he thinks his foils have been sufficiently battered, he intervenes his rapier, and separates the “pupils,” who pay their money, and walk off in great good-humour with their mutual progress in the art of self-defence.*

* Formerly, and since the time of Philip the Third, there was so much levied on each town and large village to support a master of the noble “science of defence,” i. e. the money was taken from the product of the *propios*, or

I shall say nothing of the antideluvian figures constantly crossing you in the streets of Madrid —men and women, the first in fierce, though most time-worn cocked hats, and time-out-of-mind-fashioned garments, the latter in close cauled caps and venerable farthingales,—pictures of the past, hurrying to the future. But my duty, and above all my corns, will not allow me to pass over the *Empedredo* (the pavement) of Madrid. Alas! I might here unite a chorus of voices to join in the execration, loud and deep, of that assemblage of pointed, murderous flint-corporation lands. This custom has gradually fallen into disuse. The professor is now generally “ambulant,” like the knight-errantry of old. He takes up his position in the most favourable spot he can secure, well shaded from the sun, and in a well-frequented part of the town. His school is open to all amateurs, of whatever profession, age, or costume; besides the small fine levied upon the “players” for the *wear and tear* of his lusty foils, he endeavours to increase his revenue by making the round of the gazing circle himself, with one naked rapier tucked under his arm, and jingling a few cuartos in the basket-hilt of another, to give those who are slow of apprehension a hint of what is meant as he holds this warrior “till” towards them. Judging by the length of his face on accomplishing the tour, it is to be feared that this also is another class of enthusiasm gone by. Truly, this is a rule and compass generation!

stones—polished and blunted at the top, only treacherously to facilitate the lodging of your feet between them, where, as in an angular vice, you suffer a thousand martyrdoms. Often, persons who rashly attempt to cross a street elsewhere than by the stripe of broad stones marking a more easy footing, even if they began on both legs, you will have the satisfaction of seeing finish on one (hopping, I mean to say, upon it), the other in the air, in perfect keeping with the woful faces of their owners. Let no man with corns, or tender feet, come to Madrid, unless he has committed some nameless crime, for which he prefers doing penance here rather than hereafter. Another local characteristic of the capital, is furnished by the chains, seen hanging in festoons over the gateways of several palaces of the nobility, and public monuments, as well as over some more humble roofs. This symbol of slavery is the record of “our lord the king,” having deigned, in his goodness, to honour them with his royal presence.* An antiquary,

* I have not been able to discover the origin of this singular custom. It may be, in some measure accounted for, on recalling to mind the ancient habit of depending from the walls of the churches and houses of the most distin-

such as Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck, might well employ his time and acuteness in fixing the origin and motive of this singular relic of royalty. Now, and since the year 1824, these chains are of a moderate size, terminated at each end by a sort of medallion with a tower (the arms of Castile) on one side, and a lion on the other. But those existing before 1820, when the mob tore them down, as insults to their new and short-lived liberties, were chains in earnest, *colgaduras* worth looking at, each link being about a foot in diameter—chains of the “old school.” Whether the meaning was, that this act of condescension of the sovereign chained the affections of the persons honoured by the visit, or that his royal presence converted a subject into a grateful slave, it is not for me to determine—all I can say is, that, although an old stager in Madrid, I feel knocked up by my ramble, and shall therefore, with the permission, and doubtless to the great satisfaction of the Gentle Reader, whatever may be his claims to this sugary epithet, go and sleep,

guished chieftain, the chains of the Christian captives, whom their prowess had delivered from Moorish slavery. There is a church at Toledo completely “tapisssé” with them, ever since the period of its conquest from the Saracens.

"una miaja de siesta," and take leave of the streets of Madrid.*

* Among the impediments constantly obstructing persons in a hurry, the ingenious method of securing the *ramel* or leading string of each mule or ass to the tail of its neighbour is not the least worthy of praise—presenting a string of fifteen to twenty brutes, moving at a peculiarly sober, deliberate pace, impossible to be stopped or divided. You must pass the whole troop in review, and content yourself with heaping benedictions on them as they pass, many people think slower than usual, as if to enjoy the thing—and Moorish bivouacs may be seen every day from eight o'clock in the morning until twelve, at the point formed by the streets of Caballero de Gracia and Alcalà: crowds of mules, horses, and asses, laden with small cut straw confined in a netting, take up their quarters there to wait for customers. Their drivers, in order not to lose time, secure the fore legs of the animals, and observing which way the sun throws their shadow, each proprietor stretches himself on his *manta* exactly in that grateful shade—unless indeed the *borracho* hits upon the same idea, which not unfrequently happens. Once down, and sharing his load with the pavement, all the sticks in Spain would argue the point of rising in vain. There he lies until unloaded. But this way of obtaining shadow in desert is of Moorish origin, and may be seen every day in the East.

CHAPTER III.

Hotels—Coffee-Houses—and Hired Carriages.

MADRID is, of all the cities of Spain, the one which offers the least accommodation to travellers, and at the most exorbitant charges. There are many soi disant *fondas*, *posadas*,* and hotels in the capital. The houses are indifferently designed for the purpose, and the landlords still worse. On your arrival, instead of the bustling attention usual in other countries, you are received with an air of profound indifference in both master and servants,

* The distinction between the *fonda* and *posada* is, that the first unites food and lodging, the second provides lodging only.

which tells you, in the plainest language, “remain or depart, it is the same to us.” They think all the rooms are occupied, and will not go and see until the request be repeated. After a good deal of confusion and waiting, calling up and down stairs for keys and persons not forthcoming, you are ushered into the rooms. If it is at the “Fontana de Oro,” twenty to thirty reals a day are asked for an apartment, not absolutely untenable, but of the most comfortless description. The attendance is illusory. There is a bell, however, which will afford to any one fond of the exercise of ringing, an opportunity of enjoying that pleasure *ad libitum*, for nobody will take the least notice of it, that is, if there is any thing else they think more convenient to attend to. Still, you have the satisfaction of knowing that you are not altogether abandoned; you hear fellows passing the door constantly during the peal. If one of them is obliging enough to stop, it is only to ask what possesses you to ring so, and probably to tell you that he is not the man attached to the room, but that he will acquaint the right person so soon as he appears. If you break the bell, you pay the full value of a new one, and for hanging it in the most modern manner—therefore be prudent.

The beds are composed of two mattresses laid upon a deal bottom. Were they well made, or less worn, a hard, but tolerable bed might be had—for such a luxury, however, you must not look. The bedding is so old that the wool becomes clotted into large balls or lumps, which make much the same impression on the ribs as a stone or any other harder substance you please. A man of a spare habit of body suffers considerably in this conflict between mattress and ribs, the mattresses having decidedly the best of it.*

Suppose these misfortunes forgotten, you go to dinner determined to make up to your appetite for all other disappointments. The first day the dinner is tolerable, not very greasy, and does not cost above five or six *pesetas* (five shillings), dessert included; but this is the first and last time you will enjoy such a consolation. Every thing but the price changes; attendance, clean table-cloths, well dressed dishes—all disappear! and, unless you do the same, there is no remedy but submission to the evil.

* No man with the most guilty conscience, not even Macbeth himself, could sleep more indifferently than a guest under the *forceps* of an active, vigilant, and experienced Madrid bug. The town in general is celebrated for them. The *fondas* pique themselves on the precedence.

Chenier's hotel was *once* a good house, and can yet be made comfortable, when the landlord is disposed to exert himself. It is the best kitchen in Madrid—very good cheer when bespoke and well paid for. The daily fare is but indifferent, and no dinner is set down for less than a dollar a-head. Morinier's establishment was formerly better conducted than it is now. There is a *table d'hôte*, not very good nor very well composed. This house, however, has the advantage of baths within it, which, if not the cleanest or best served, were, at least, the first luxury of the kind imported into Madrid. The “Fonda del Comercio” is a step towards a tolerable *restaurant*, where a dinner may be had from three pesetas to a dollar, well cooked and served. An entertainment, recommended to the “savoir faire” of M. Debbecq with due anticipation, would not disgrace a Parisian restaurant.

The Fondas kept by native artists are abominable. The *Dos Amigos*, *Fonda de Europa*, *del Carbon*, &c. &c., exhibit different gradations of detestable cookery.*

* Chenier's hotel, Morinier's hotel, and the *Fonda del Comercio*, are kept by Frenchmen. Were it not for the

There is, notwithstanding, an impulse given to this essential branch of civilization in Spain, and it is probable that the conciliating system followed by the present government will gradually extend foreign communication and enterprise, and, among other improvements, render a *bifstec aux pommes* an intelligible dish all over the metropolis, and not looked upon, as it is at present, as an abstruse and impossible combination of foreign charlatanism.

The cafés have made more rapid progress towards perfection; ten years ago, Madrid could scarcely count three decent ones; within the last five years they have prodigiously increased: twelve, of the best class, are to be found in various parts of the town, besides sundry lesser establishments. The Café Blis, in the Calle Alcalà; that of Veneria, Calle del Principe, St. Luis, Soleto's, and the Café Nuevo, with its magnificent local, are the most in vogue; it is to be hoped that this industry of an occasional retired maître d' hotel of an ambassador, removing to the country, and ministering to the hunger of travellers. Madrid would be altogether untenable for any length of time, unless a regular house was kept, which does not extend to bachelors' views or their purses.

last will not share the fate of the too gigantic enterprise of Santa Catalina.*

In the year 1814, Madrid could offer no other place of refreshment but darkling and bad smelling crypts, called *botellerias*, where all classes indiscriminately went to smoke and drink rum, brandy, "vino generoso," and such like elegant stomachics. The Café de la Ava de Moca, in the Calle Alcalà, is the only house of the old stamp now to be met with; despising and eschewing all innovation with the same strength of purpose as its habitués, elderly lovers of the peaceful games of domino, draughts, and chess, silence and the same faces reign in this place from one year's end to the other.

The more elegant cafés have become the daily rendezvous of unfledged politicians, who enounce their crude opinions with a loudness and vehemence very different from the whispering caution of an earlier date,—another proof of the tolerance and good sense of the government;—for it is not the idle talk of

* The saloon occupied by this café is enormous, and, since the bankruptcy of the former tenant, has been fitted up for the masked balls of the carnival.

loungers which endanger public tranquillity; such opinions are set down at their just value. Government seems, every day, more impressed with the necessity of ruling the country on the system of a good *ménage*, i. e. giving and taking reciprocally, which married folk say is the only road to peace in matrimony.

Very good refreshments of all sorts may be had in these cafés, and considerable comfort, if you pay no attention to the incorrigible vulgarity and ignorance of the “waiters”—only so in name,* for when your wants are attended to, the *mozo* lights his *papeleta* (paper cigar) at the chafing dish you make use of, draws a chair, and places himself in a recumbent posture against the same table, as if he were an old and very intimate acquaintance.

* The manners of the majority of the Spanish nation are, without doubt, the most vulgar and brutal of any in Europe, the Germans not excepted. The Spanish gentry are much to blame in this respect; they see the revolting familiarity of their servants and dependents, (some do not,) but take no notice of, or pains to correct it; consequently, they may boast of patronizing a train of menials not to be matched in any part of the known world.

The domestic habits of the Spaniard will, for a long time, prevent any great increase in public establishments for eating and drinking: he prefers his *puchero* at home, for then he does as he likes. The *café* he regards as a lounge for an hour, a convenient room wherein to smoke a cigar or meet a friend, but not as a place of habitual resort, nor for expending money. The *fonda* is relished every now and then on a feast day, but not as a daily resource. Perhaps more active commerce, more liberal institutions, and greater familiarity with foreigners and their habits, may, in course of time, influence national inclinations. But for many years to come, the speculation of embarking capital in establishments of this kind, will always be of doubtful and precarious success.

The proprietors of carriages for hire run pretty much the same risk. There are no *fiares* in Madrid. The distances they would have to go are not great, nor would the inhabitants spend their money on them, were they at their orders. Vehicles may be had by the day, or for half that time; from five to eight dollars are exacted for a trundling over the pavement

of Madrid at a snail's pace, the mules or horses rarely breaking out of a steady walking pace. When a family has a set-off visit to pay, the 'coche' is ordered;—it does not happen often, so the expence is thought of, as little as possible. The riding family keep looking out of both windows, in the hope of meeting acquaintances to see them in a carriage. Whenever an antideluvian "*quadriga*" stops before a door, first one window opens, then another; gradually the whole household are at the balconies to see who it is *que gasta coche* (who spends money in coaching), and run the names of their acquaintance on their fingers, to recollect if they have the honour of receiving any visits in a carriage, which, were it to appear in London, would certainly be immediately stopped and condemned as a public nuisance.

The Calesins are the favourite carriages, and that because calesins and bulls are almost synonymous. The high aristocracy, the rich proprietors and merchants, relish and introduce foreign usages and luxuries. But these are despised by the rest of society. They will have their own way of living and enjoying them-

selves, and they are perfectly right. It is always a respectable prejudice, that of an over-fondness for traditions and customs handed down through a long course of centuries. The discrepancies in the social existence of nations give a zest to travel, and a stamp to character. I hope never to see the day when one tongue and one routine should be identical all over the world.

CHAPTER IV.

Casas de Huespedes—Lodging Houses—Landladies.

WHEN a stranger comes to Madrid, he must house himself somewhere; if he has no friends, (and even if he has, they are not in general very much delighted with the stay of the *amigo*, or the offer of a shake down) he has only the alternative of going to a wretched *fonda* or *posada*, or taking a furnished or unfurnished private lodging. A slip of paper tied to the middle of the balcony indicates an *unfurnished*—when placed on one side of it, a *furnished* lodging. It is an old and true saying, “of two evils choose the least;” and, on that score,

I would, by all means, recommend you to take private lodgings, especially if you are fond of gossip and sitting over the *brazier* with the landlady, and listening to her tales of other and better times. It has never yet fallen to my lot to meet with a *patrona* who has not been *un dia* (once upon a time) something very fine indeed. The best houses of this class, however, do not shew paper on their balconies,—a piece of economy which saves their purses as well as their paper, inasmuch as it enables them to escape the unmerciful tax levied on all known letters of lodgings.

Independent of the obligation of every *cavaliere* to treat the lady of the house with the greatest respect, it is not at all amiss that he should be put upon his guard against the ingenious circumlocutions and velvet reception he is always sure to experience on his first entrance.

When you mount to the first, second, third, or, mayhap, fourth *piso*, or story, ring at the door, but contrive not to get angry during a prolix reconnoitring in front and rear, from well-combined grated holes in the wall and door; say, in answer to the two queries, “*Quien es bled?*—

Que quiere usted?" (Who are you?—what do you want?) repeated in the most provoking manner four or five times, "*Gente de paz,*" (a man of peace,) and try, if possible, that your tone of voice be not at variance with the speech. Bolts and bars are run back at length, "A room to be let?" "Yes, sir; are you the cavalier wishing to see it?—Pray enter, while I call the senora." The lady enters in her *boudoir negligé*, but not of such a nature as to oblige you to affect the Joseph—"Senora, at your feet."—"Cavallero, I kiss your hand." "Is this the room you wish to let?" "Yes, if it accommodates you—Nero! Pray follow me, look through the house, look well about you, I confess I always like people to convince themselves with their own eyes. Here you will find, if not gold and silver, cleanliness and care, that you may depend upon;—observe this table, *de caoba masixa*, (all mahogany,)—the chairs are nearly new—this *luna* (looking-glass)! you would not buy such an one, even at the fair, for a thousand reals. The *estern* (matting) is a little faded, but it is clean—a hole or two, it is true. Lodgers (I do not hint at you)

are so careless, they stamp with their iron-heeled boots and throw furniture about so, no matting can stand it ;—ah ! you are looking at the curtains ; they shall go to the wash immediately. Those flies are so troublesome. Be kind enough to walk into the *alcoba*. There; see what an excellent bed you have got, with its thrice three new mat-trasses—the king himself has no better ; also its bit of carpet for the feet when stepping out of bed. How dear carpets are ! Here you will be quite ‘independiente’ ; you can go out by this back door ; nor hear a fly buz the whole day ; a rack too, to hang up your clothes—the rogue of a carpenter made me pay ten reals for it the other day. There is no standing the tradesmen of Madrid : money and more money is all they look to. Vaya ! I believe you will allow no comfort is wanting ; every thing is to your hand ; you will live here like a prince or duke.”—“True, but I see no chest of drawers !”—“Drawers ? how odd !—have you not got *baules* (trunks), cavalier ? who ever thinks of drawers when he has trunks ? I have got stands for them ; no fear

they shall be kept free from damp ; when they are good they furnish the room.”* “Yes, but they do not replace drawers.” “There are none in the house : I never saw clothes kept elsewhere but in trunks ; here, in Spain, we always do so. *Vaya, vaya ! go to, go to !* it is a singular idea ; here we never think of drawers.” “They are indispensable to me. I wish you a good morning.” “Heh ! man, what a quick temper ; why really you strangers are like gunpowder ! *Vamos, sit down here on the sofa,*† and let us chat a little. Everything will

* Until very lately, a chest of drawers was a phenomenon in most Spanish houses. The wearing apparel is kept and huddled in large wooden trunks, which are placed, like coffins, on a sort of bier or stand, made to receive them : sometimes this stand is painted red or green, and is then looked upon as a great ornament. To this day, considerably more than half the lodging houses in Madrid do not possess this indispensable piece of furniture, and not a few private houses are still without it. The want is not felt by the natives.

† A Spanish sofa is the most perfect stool of penance ever invented ; it is nothing more than an elongated rush-bottomed chair, with a dyed cherry-wood railing to the

be settled talking it over. Vaya ! Pray how long are you in Madrid ?" "Not long ; I am pressed for time." "What a race you are running ! but do as you please. How much would you give me if I got a chest of drawers ? you can advance me some little money towards it. Here are no dogs to dirty the house, nor squalling children." "I can offer nothing more." "Como ! what, and you seeking all the comforts of a Canonigo ? ho, caballero ! that is no price for such a room, and living in a house like mine ! Si, Senor, I would have you to know that, although now unfortunately reduced to this traffic, I have not been always so, nor was I obliged to go on foot to the Prado of a hot day ; what's to be done ? it is over ; let it pass. I am a woman of good family, and need not be ashamed of my relations." "Good morning, Senora." "I know the Inspector of Residences, and am on intimate terms with the wife of a councillor : and then, have I not in my own house, my small party of high official back and sides. There is no probability of rest or comfort on such a thing.

people? Have I not lodged the first nobility?" "I have the honour of wishing you a very good morning." "Vaya, usted con Dios—since you wish it; Pero, do me the favour to say what *asistencia* you want—complete or partial;* for that makes a difference: as far as a good *pucherero* and substantial *principio*, you will nowhere be better taken care of." "Regret to have given you so much trouble." "Not at all; why do not you walk into the kitchen? 'tis like a looking-glass, or sheet of gold." "Until another opportunity." "Go, with God and the Virgin! Should you meet any *amigo* looking to be well

* *Asistencia* is always given in a furnished lodging, i. e. the attendance of a maid-servant: the bargain is made according to the amount of the service required. *Asistencia completa* includes cooking, breakfast, dinner, and supper, and a candle or lamp-light, together with bed and sheeting. *Half asistencia* consists in giving light at night and preparing chocolate in the morning; when the lodger finds his own bedding, this usually makes a difference of two dollars in the monthly price. It is usual with Spaniards to move about with their own beds. One of the first questions asked on entering a lodging house, is, "Do you bring your bed?"

lodged, you know where to direct him." The door is held open until you turn the first landing place, and so ends your negociation. You sally forth, to repeat pretty nearly the same part, until you find something to suit you.

It is always preferable to avoid the houses of ladies, who, like the above, boast a long line of illustrious ancestors, and a circle of distinguished acquaintance; for, notwithstanding such heraldic claims to confidence, they will sometimes try to swell your monthly bill of expences under various pretences. They will ask you for an alms in the respectable shape of an *adelante* (an *advance* of the stipulated sum); but "money advanced, money lost;" as long as you remain in the house, you must continue in advance, and when you leave it, leave its amount also, or live at dagger's point with the *patrona*,—a herculean and desperate task.

If you are "curious" in matters of bodily comfort, such as a little good wine for private solace, preserves, sweetmeats, tea, coffee, or even *Eau de Cologne*, be not surprised to find them dwindling away, not surely from neglect, but from too much

attention on the part of the “landlady.” Avoid the imprudence, however, of making the least remonstrance on the subject; it would but bring a storm of words about your ears, besides subjecting you to the just indignation of the inspector of his family, the wife of the *consegero*, and consorts. “What is it you mean? this to me? am I anybody and everybody? No, caballero; I have got as rich and blue blood in my veins as those who say more about it. What would the wife of the councillor say, if she knew what was passing, and the inspectress?—la revuelven todo veneno (it would turn her all poison); Vaya, little are you aware of who I am. If this house does not please you, pray seek another; I scorn to keep anybody against his will. Here have I lodged people *de muchísimos campanillos* (of a great number of bells) indeed, gente who speak to the king the day they like in his *despacho*,* and even wear

* Speaking to the king in his *despacho* is synonymous with obtaining a private audience; none but grandees of Spain, and the ministry, can enter the King’s cabinet when they think proper.

mas bandos y colgajos (more cordons and crosses) than I do pins, and smoke his majesty's cigars.* You are little of a cavalier to notice such things."†

The usual price for a decent room, with a chest of drawers, passable furniture, and floor matted during the winter months, with an "alcove" for bed-room, is from seven to

* It was habitual with Ferdinand to offer cigars to those in his confidence or good graces; the *cigarros del roy* were easily known by their great size and excellent flavour. When in a good humour, he would send two or three boxes of them as a present to a favourite.

† There is a much more respectable class of landladies to be found in Madrid,—plain, industrious females, without any pretensions to station in society, devoting their whole attention to the care of their houses. When a stranger is fortunate enough to meet with a 'pratona' of this description, he may be very comfortable, even in Madrid. They are strictly honest, cleanly and active; attach themselves, in a short time, to their lodger; and it must be his own fault if his 'ménage' is not to his taste. The vain unprincipled "ladies," described in the text, are those who usually receive strangers; who are seduced by an appearance of manner and elegance, which they are not long in appreciating at its just value.

ten reals; but new comers pay a great deal more: an unfurnished apartment, on a third story, will sometimes cost them as much. Any one, well directed, who has some knowledge of the town, will be very well lodged, and, mayhap, have his cup of chocolate in the morning, for the sum of ten reals, and that in the best quarters of the town. If you wish to live in the Spanish fashion, there are many respectable houses who board and lodge at three pesetas (half-a-crown) a day, including breakfast, dinner, and supper. Four pesetas entitles one to very tolerable fare and a good room; a dollar a day is the highest price asked in the houses of "huespedes;" the fare is good, varied, and abundant, though not always cooked to a foreign taste.

When it is an object to avoid the noisy and promiscuous society of a boarding house, a stranger finds many difficulties in arranging his "vie de garçon" in Madrid; he must either live at the *restaurant* or *fondas*, which are not to be recommended for health or comfort, or have his meals prepared at home:

this last is certainly preferable to the other, but it requires a cook and other requisites not to be looked for in the Spanish capital; the expence is great, and no good result obtained. If he can subject his palate to the *puchero* (a very wholesome and good dish), and anything else, well or ill cooked, afterwards, he may prolong his residence indefinitely; if he cannot, or will not, the sooner he returns north the better.*

When a lodging is decidedly taken, the news gradually filters through the different apartments and stories of the house. In the course of two or three days, the inmates find out that the new lodger is a Frenchman,† a

* Female cooks from Biscay and the Basque Provinces are sometimes to be hired in Madrid. They are the only tolerable servants in the whole country. Those from the sea-coast, St. Sebastian, &c. understand something of English cookery and English cleanliness.

† Since the invasion of the French, anything that has got a strange accent, blue eyes, and hair at all inclining to auburn or flaxen colour, is set down as a “Franciss” (a Frenchman). This general name also saves headaches over maps, where geography is not looked upon as necessary to existence.

“soltero” (a bachelor): if in the service, his rank is a great object with the mothers and daughters; if he wears two epaulets of captain, he may count upon a very hospitable reception from them.*

Some old-fashioned *vicino* (neighbour) comes the next day and makes his visit of *cumplido*, to offer himself, lodging, and family, requiring a great deal of pressing before he will let go his hat, or trust it on any chair or table in the room. His memory is faithful, and informs the new neighbour of the *vida y milagros* (life and miracles) of every inhabitant of the house, from the “entre suelo” (ground-floor) up to the “guardilla,” or attic. So great a piece of civility requires the same at your hands; the visit is returned, and years may pass without any further communication.†

The *muchachas* (young girls) living in the house, manage to get a look at you while winding down the staircase; the kitchen win-

* The widow of a captain in the Spanish army is entitled to a pension of twenty pounds sterling a year.

† This antiquated and tiresome etiquette is, like many others, falling into disuse.

dows, being generally placed in front of each landing-place, afford them an excellent ambush, whence they may make their remarks, and decide whether the "*forastero*" is likeable or not: if the sentence is favourable, every day will bring smiling faces peeping through the windows of the *ranages*, and an acquaintance, in that case, is neither difficult nor far distant; should it be otherwise, the new lodger may go up and down stairs as often as the house cat, and bear testimony to the life of retirement and seclusion led by the junior females in his vicinity.*

* These casual acquaintanceships are usually made on the staircase, between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, when most *vecinos* retire to home and supper. The delay in opening doors on the different stories brings people together. Spanish gallantry requires every cavalier to offer his hand to aid a lady to mount the staircase. This slight intercourse gradually ripens into better acquaintance; that is, if the first inspection from the windows was favourable.

CHAPTER V.

Interior of a Spanish House—The general Poverty of Spanish Furniture—The Sordidness of Household Expenditure—The many Tenancies of a Spanish House—Spanish Aversion to Fire-places—Display—Toilette—Usual Avocations of the Ladies—Spanish Meals—The Siesta—The Finish of the Day.

FOREIGNERS in general do not attach that endearing feeling to house and home which is so prevalent in England, where everything is made secondary to fire-side comfort, and domestic enjoyment. When these primary necessities are satisfied, then, and not till then, is any attention paid to exterior appearances. In France, though the people are always talking to one of *chez nous*—*chez nous*, homes are not remarkable for ease or comfort. Their

object is not to live in their house, but in public ; they take measures accordingly, and act logically upon this principle. Spaniards, whose habits are decidedly more domestic than their northern neighbours, are still further removed from the conveniences of "home." What we understand by comfort, appears to them a fictitious want, invented by an enervating civilization. They do not feel the absence of almost every thing embracing the enjoyments of existence. They live on as their fathers did before them ; food of a very plain description, a home to shelter, and a bed to sleep in, compose their domestic vocabulary, and they are certainly not very particular as to the quality of those requisites.

It has been before remarked, that the higher aristocracy and wealthy proprietors are European in their houses and mode of life, offering little or no room for observation. It may, however, be said that, even in the majority of houses of this last description, splendid as they are in appearance, the apartments destined to the daily occupation of the family are mean,

untidy, and ill-furnished to a degree. The suite of rooms allotted for receiving company alone, attract the care of the master. Rich furniture and every refinement of luxury are there united; rows of embroidered chairs and inviting sofas are set out in a formal and ostentatious way, but are seldom or never pressed by any part of the human person. No every-day enjoyment is ever known or permitted in this temple of vanity.*

The travelled portion of society naturally aspires to the improvements they noticed abroad, and endeavour to realize them in their own persons and houses on their return. But the great majority forms to itself a little circle of ideas on

* This singular mania even travels out of Spain with some of the natives. A Spanish merchant in Bordeaux, well known for his immense wealth and liberality, owns a magnificent hotel in that city, fit for the residence of a prince. The great suite of rooms is furnished with almost regal splendour, whilst those reserved for his own use are not even painted, and the furniture of the most homely description. This is acting exactly on the principle of the Irish peasant, who takes off a good great-coat (*riding-coat Hibernicè*), and a stout pair of shoes, when threatened with bad roads or bad weather, “not to spoil them.”

this and most other subjects, peculiar to their country and themselves. It is usual to see men possessed of an annual income of three to six thousand dollars (from six to twelve hundred pounds) living in a first or second floor, consisting of four or five rooms, kitchen included. They despise anything like draped furniture ; window curtains are an innovation of very recent introduction. In winter, only the tiled floor is covered by a coarse matting. The chairs are of varnished cherry-wood with rush bottoms, canopé *idem* ; no lounger, no friendly arm-chair ; none of that somniferous form, not unaptly termed “sleepy hollow,” but a chest of drawers —“another innovation ;” two or three crane-legged tables ; a quinquel lamp placed upon one or other of them, and not intended to be lit : the well white-washed walls, adorned with a choice collection of valuable and highly coloured engravings, suspended in mahogany frames from brass-headed nails, representing scenes of the war of Independence, the Victims of the Second of May, Death of Davis and Velarde, and other national reminiscences, complete the “adornos”

of the state room of the house where you pay your first visit of ceremony.*

The owner of all these treasures seldom exceeds a dollar in his daily expences, including two servants, a male and female. He shews his lodgings with pride and satisfaction. "Here, my friend, I am very well off indeed. In winter the sun shines upon me from nine in the morning until he sets. A *brasero* is almost superfluous: where else could I be so comfortable? Then, in summer, it bears upon this corner window for an hour in the morning—no money can pay for a house like this."† By a singu-

* In justice to their Catholicity and devotion, it should be mentioned, that few apartments are left without a choice of *San José La Virgén del Pilar*, a *St. John the Baptist*, and other sacred effigies. Some are exemplary enough to ornament the *Pared* with a neat well-wrought crucifix, and small marble holy water pot, to match a slip of blessed palm, relieving the monotony beneath. During the late reign, many citizens thought it just as well to exhibit rosaries on the tables, ready for use. These, and many other devout manifestations, are now generally dispensed with.

† Thus far he is right. Any inhabitant of Madrid will vouch for the invaluable gaiety and warmth imparted to a

lar contrast of ideas this same individual will lose a dozen doubloons at *monte* without emotion, and expend four or five dollars a day in the hire of a crazy bug-inhabited carriage and skeleton horses, attended by a couple of lacqueys, whom it would require a steam engine to cleanse.

The houses in Spain are built upon the usual continental system, of letting each story to a different person or family. This arrangement would, at first sight, run counter to an Englishman's notions of quiet, and choosing his own acquaintance. He would dread noise and forced familiarity with so many near neighbours. Nothing of the kind, however, happens. The same people live under the same roof without forming the least acquaintance, and are as independent of each other in their

room visited in winter by the sun, and the freezing miseries of one deprived of his rays. In rooms with a northern aspect, two, even three *braseros* are insufficient to maintain a tolerable temperature. Let nobody who does not wish to live four months in Siberia, hire a lodging labouring under this irreparable privation.

movements as if they lived in separate houses ; the private confidence of tattling servants being the sole medium of communication, which, if it does not take place in the house itself, infallibly does in the market place, where they meet and compare notes every morning. There must be very little harmony indeed in a family, if their bickerings are ever heard in any of the other floors. The barking of the poodles as their masters come in and out, and the hob-nailed shoes of the *aguador* (water carrier) upon the staircase, are the only indications of vicinity overheard. With the exception of great houses, and a very small number indeed of the generality, there are no fire-places to be found in Madrid. Some "Francesados" (Frenchified people), imitating the bold daring of shivering diplomatists, have got Prussian stoves into their rooms, notwithstanding the patriotic opposition of the *Corregidor* and *ayuntamiento*, who had the greatest objection to the appearance of iron flues perforating the houses, and destroying, as they justly observed, the symmetry of the streets, which, saving that

of Alcola, is doubtless a Halcyon dream of their worshipes,—there not being a more variegated collection of buildings in all Christendom than that which the city of Madrid exhibits.

This *fireless* system, so cruel a privation to foreigners, is not at all felt by the natives. Some even pretend that the sight of a fire gives them a headach, and maintain that it cannot warm thoroughly. “How is it possible you foreigners can praise your fire-places, when every gust of wind down the chimney is enough to blow the people out of the room, or set a wind-mill going? Talk to us of a *brasero!*” There is no use in arguing this point with them. The *brasero* has the same effect here as the tea-table in England; it brings people together. The ladies, young and old, draw their chairs and dispose their garments favourably for the admission of heat to their persons, and crouch round this compound of cinders and charcoal; after a great deal to do, they succeed in scorching their boots and shoes, and cauterizing the tips of their toes; their backs being all this time at or about zero. When arrived at this point of

enjoyment, they rub their hands, look round at one another, call for chocolate, the men for cigars, and begin to chat as if they were in an oven. The *brasero* is certainly more economical than a fire-place, and this, it is to be suspected, more than the pleasure of enjoying the extremes of heat and cold, is the true reason which induces the proprietors of houses, as well as those who lodge in them, to prefer their chafing dish to a fire-place.

The apartments are confined,* and distri-

* In the new houses more particularly, the antipathy to fire places, even in the buildings actually raising, give a fair specimen of some of the rooted prejudices to be found in the Spanish character. Despite the piercing cold experienced in Madrid during the winter, naturally pointing out a good fire-place as a specific remedy, the proprietors of houses will not allow their architect to open a single fire-place, alleging that they do not wish to have their houses burnt about their ears, as happens in France and England, and other such remote countries, where people do not know what they are about. "Let them keep a good large *brasero*, good mats, and wear worsted stockings, and things can be made very comfortable. If they don't like that, 'a otra parte con la musica,' (let them go elsewhere with their music.)" Two fire-places were actually opened in a house

buted for the most part into a principal *sala*, with an *alcola* (alcove), and *gabinete* out of it, and an alcove in the front of the house—a small *comedor* (eating-room), and two or three more small back sleeping-rooms for the family. The *amo* (master of the house) occupies the front apartment. The furniture of the *sala* and principal alcove is good, because they are to be seen by strange eyes. The “state bed,” too, is decked out for inspection; the door of the recess being artfully left open, that visitors may convince themselves of how things are carried on in the family—that comforts are not wanting. The other dormitories are far from answering this description; these *camas de tables*—beds are composed of two moveable wooden or iron stands, upon which three or four deal boards are laid, and a couple of mattresses receive the persons of the younger members of the family. If this is numerous,

without the knowledge of the owner. His first step was to have them walled up, and the leading article of the renting conditions was an absolute prohibition to make use of them.

three or four beds are made to fit in each alcove. The rest of the conveniences consist of a chair or two, and sundry old-fashioned bow-roofed trunks, covered with calf skin (hair outside), which are the receptacles for the clothes and finery of the young ladies. Many a lovely girl, stepping lightly and proudly on the Prado, has risen from a couch by no means of enervating softness, and left a *tocador* (toilet) not altogether a model for cleanliness and order.

A very diminutive *jicara* (cup) of chocolate, and morsel of bread, is the universal breakfast all over Spain, and is usually taken in bed ; a large glass of water dilutes it properly in the stomach, and then people begin to think of getting up, but not always of washing themselves. If the weather be fine, the *matrimoné* (married pair) appear upon the same balcony (upon separate if there has been a tiff), to enjoy the fresh air ; the gentleman in a complete *négligé* protected by his cloak, the lady trusting to a shawl, and morning petticoat, and slippers on her unstockinged feet, for concealment. No

art is meant, nor practised. You see them both as they broke from the arms of Morpheus ; sweat sits in the hair of the husband (no one wears preludes or nightcaps) and a graceful confusion in the tresses of his wife.

There are examples of conjugal felicity, where the lady is seen reclining hand and arm on the shoulder of her chosen partner, and playing upon it with her fingers in a playful absent manner, as people do when they fiddle with a piano. Severe and saturnine observers insinuate that such extra endearments are to be looked upon with suspicion, as invariably practised when husbands are made "fit for heaven." Mention is made of one hardened stoic who declared that he had never known what domestic happiness was, until his wife began to fancy there were other men almost as good looking and amiable as himself. "From that auspicious period she was a model of sweetness and attention to the most extravagant of my whims and caprices. What a wife I lost the day she died!"

The *fresco* taken, the couple separate : the

wife to mass,* the husband to smoke his cigar, and stroll about the house until it is time to take the eleven o'clock luncheon. Some dispense with this altogether; others eat some trifle, and sally forth to idle away the time until two o'clock calls to dinner.† This meal

* To mass, and afterwards to "go a shopping" in the Calle Montera and Carmen, where she is sure of meeting her friends, and may be a "friend." Two hours are passed in examining and discovering the dresses of the last *figurinas* (models) from Paris. She generally returns home with a supply of "caramelos" (pastillos) strongly recommended for the chest, and gently forced upon her by a silver-tongued adorer. She goes out alone, but by some singular coincidence always comes back escorted to the door by devoted cavaliers picked up on the way.

† The habits described are those of persons neither rich nor poor, who at least spend from fifty to one hundred dollars a month. Anything above that is looked upon as wealth in Spain, and occasions more self-indulgence. Public servants, in general, enter into the class here described. They, however, must take "las once" (the luncheon) in their office, government allowance, a tumbler of wine and a crust of bread for this purpose. The dinner hour all over Spain is from one to three o'clock; few dine before or after, unless it be the religious communities, or persons affecting foreign habits.

is composed of a substantial soup of bread or vermicelli, maccaroni, or rice. Dainty people have the livers of fowls mixed up with it. The *cocido* or *puchero* comes after; of which beef, fowl, and bacon, are the ingredients. On another dish appear the *ricos garbarizos* (rich pea beans) and other vegetables, relieved by a fiery looking suassage from Estremadura.* One, or at most two, *principios* (entires) follow the soup and *puchero*. A dessert of walnuts, raisins, cheese, &c., closes the repast.

Unless in the depth of winter, the *siesta* plunges the houses into profound silence for an hour or two after dinner. The ladies then begin to think of renewing their work or embroidery, or arrange their toilet for the even-

* Principio here understood—entrée—stewed veal—a verngo—something roast. They do not understand roasting in Spain. The meat is exposed to the fire for half a day: a mutton chop is not considered done unless it has been first cooked, and then parched before the fire for at least an hour or two. Fowls are sacrificed in the same way. Saving the *puchero*, which is a good and wholesome dish, Spanish kitchen insanity (for *cookery* it cannot be called) is the abomination of abominations.

ing Prado, leaving the men to follow their wandering inclinations elsewhere. The family refreshes in the cafés on its return from the promenade, if the escort is gallant enough to make the request. Thence to the theatre, if treated to a box, or with tickets for the “casuela;” the tertulias begin to fill—the same subject is talked over fifty times—every body allows the nights are wonderfully long and tedious—eleven o’clock strikes—the “guisado”* must not be kept waiting. Another day is begun, to be followed by its fellow, in monotonous succession.

* *Guisado*—a stew of beef, the ordinary dish for supper, and not a bad one.

CHAPTER VI.

Servants—Their Apathy—Their Vindictiveness—Female Servants—The Nastiness of Spanish Domestics—Their Carelessness.

SPANIARDS have many good qualities, and are fit for a great many things; but they must confess that they are the worst and dirtiest servants in the world. They hate private fully as much as they do military service; a Spaniard is a Christian Arab; he feels a hankering in his heart after the boundless freedom of the desert; he loathes all sort of subjection to another's will, in eating, drinking, or sleeping. To sleep and idle his life away is the *beau idéal* of existence.

They are considered honest ; but I fear that the credit given them, on that score, is more owing to the old reputation gained by Gallicia and the Asturias for sending forth men of trustworthiness, than to the fact itself.* If they would only be contented with dirt, and do their business smartly and well out of hand, some precautions might be taken against their uncleanliness ; but they are prone to look upon themselves as invaluable, when they can polish a boot, or lay a plate without breaking it.

You hear everybody complaining of their servants ; it is as universal as murmuring at one's

* The Galicians and Asturias were certainly originally honest : the first continue to be so, although surrounded by the bad examples of the capital ; for they herd together, keep watch upon one another, and usually monopolize the trades of water-carriers and porters. They seldom serve as household servants. The Asturias, when they first arrive in the Capital, have not yet forgotten the *honradez* of their parents, but they soon lose sight of that and of their countrymen, in the constant change of service ; theirs being entirely devoted to private houses. I have known some servants from the Asturias turn out finished rogues.

fate. Drowsy, negligent, but honest. This reminds one of the lady who neglected her house, and husband, and family, in every possible way, and triumphantly answered all reproaches with “Am I not faithful to your couch?—pray where’s my cortego?” These *criados* are born to put any reasonable man to his wit’s end, and out of all patience. Are you pressed for time, they profit by the *à propos* to augment their natural slowness. Inquire anxiously for anything, without stirring from their place or chair, if seated, they exclaim “No lose,” (I know nothing about it); a yawn or scratching of the head softening down the intelligence. The idea of their bestirring themselves, and taking pains to satisfy your inquiries, is altogether fiction, and not to be looked for in Madrid real life. If you get angry, “Ay! que genio tan malo tiene,” (what a bad temper he has got), there is no living with such a master.” Should you be ill-advised enough to take a stripling, with the idea of forming him yourself, be assured the day he begins to be of any use, he will demand double wages, to have an excuse for

running the gauntlet of places. Should you venture to bestow any chastisement for such ingratitude, or any other superlative perversity, he will hint, plainly enough, his plans of revenge;* nor will he be slow in concerting matters for the purpose with some of the gentlemen

* One instance of this kind happened within the writer's immediate knowledge. A servant, discharged for dishonesty, and denounced to the police as a suspicious character, watched his opportunity, gave the rendezvous to three bravos, in the door-way of his former master's residence, and entered the house under the pretext of delivering a letter, his person not being known to his successor. His master was fortunately absent; disappointed, therefore, of finding his intended victim, the villain wounded the servant severely, and proceeded to rob the house; alarm, however, was given by the escape of the wounded man, but the ruffian was not arrested, having contrived to escape in the confusion. Professors in this art are in the habit of hiring themselves in houses they think worth robbing, to obtain a useful knowledge of the premises, and commit the robbery with the greater security. The vicious practice of not giving discharges to servants, facilitates such practices. Fear often prevents pusillanimous people from reporting a bad character as he deserves.

of the garote and stiletto, who nightly prowl the streets, sometimes on their own affairs, at others, to attend to the quarrels of their employers. So that some evening, when you least expect it, as you are returning home, wrapped up in your cloak, humming a favourite *morceau* from the opera you have just been hearing, or turning in your mind the several good points and attractions of a new conquest undertaken, such sweet fancies are put to flight by a volley of cudgel blows, or, what is worse, by a keen *nabaja* plunged into your back, right between the shoulders. If you survive to frequent any more operas or *tertulias*, no blame can, in any fairness, be attached to the intentions of your *quondam* pupil, or the exertions of his nocturnal friend. The only servants at all worthy of the name, are to be found in the diplomatic houses, and in those of a very few grandes, and rich individuals, who live in the European manner, and therefore do not enter into Spanish comparison.

The female domestics are, as housewives declare, still worse, from their adding to the

good qualities of the other sex certain little frailties which are peculiar to their own. The *heart* is always busy it appears, and prompts them not only to admit the *querido*, but also a few cavaliers, his friends, who sometimes conclude the evening with the murder of this other Desdemona, and the robbery of the house. It is not the general practice to give house-livery to servants; the most that is allowed when a carriage is kept by the family, is a frock-coat and laced hat for appearance sake, to cover the nastiness of the lacqueys, which soon become as filthy as themselves. They appear within doors in the simple and convenient dress of their village,—a short frieze jacket, general contempt of waistcoat, shirt thrown open at the collar, and pantaloons, long or short, according to the donor's legs, for they seldom get their own measure taken for such superfluities. When bent on doing things neatly, and as they ought to be done, they begin by carefully turning up the jacket sleeves, displaying the anatomy of the wrist in full perfection. To snuff a candle,

they take it off the table, use the snuffers immediately over your head ; emptying, in five cases out of six, its aromatic contents on your person or hair, exposing the latter to a general conflagration, if at all of a dry or frizzy nature. Overturning soup plates, placing a dish before you instead of a plate, &c. &c., are things not worth mentioning.*

The care they take of your wearing apparel is equal to the rest : never trust a good coat or brush to such hands ; full of vigour and *gaubauras*, they will ruin both in a *sophlo*. This is a hopeless topic—the only advice is seeing as little of them in-doors as possible. Rather suffer some inconvenience than hire a Madrid servant ; limit his services to the hum-

* A common habit of the Spanish servants, when serving at table, is emptying the contents of one dish into another before the guests, to facilitate carriage. This, and many other sins against cleanliness and decorum, are never noticed by their masters. Therefore, they judge their own plan is the best, and when chance throws them into the service of masters somewhat more delicate in their tables and habits, any reprimand is considered a proof of ill temper—an overbearing gabacho !

ble office of shoe-black in the mornings, and going of indifferent errands: but for any interior service, if you are in a decent casa de Huespedes, it is better to trust to the care of the landlady and her family.*

* I would not advise any person who has a good foreign servant, to bring him to Spain, if he intends to remain there for any length of time. They do not require many weeks to discover the absolute inability of the native servants, and their own comparative value. Spanish grandees and men of fortune are equally alive to this want, and offer enormous wages to a regular valet. Few domestics are proof against the desire of novelty; they abandon their former masters, and form one of the menial aristocracy, known under the name of Señores camereros Estrangeros (foreign gentlemen of the chamber). Their small number makes them mercenary; the consequences are obvious.

CHAPTER VII.

Markets.

THE supply of provisions in the markets of Madrid is various and abundant, although the quality of butchers' meat is very inferior indeed to that of other capitals, and even to many provincial towns of the Peninsula. No metropolis is so completely destitute of all immediate resources; with the exception of the exaggerated parsneps of the village of "Funcarral," within two short leagues of the gates, the environs supply no-

thing in the eatable way. Some flocks of half-starved sheep wander over the stubble-fields to pick a precarious meal; the guardian dogs, including the “pastor fido,” might all sit as portraits of leanness and starvation.

The horned cattle destined to the consumption of the capital descend from the plains of Old Castello, at the other side of the Guadarama; some droves come up from Arragon. All have long journeys to perform before they reach the slaughter-house. The neighbouring province of the Mancha contributes nothing in this way, a cow being there as scarce as a clean face. The countrymen of Don Juisoto live, when they can get it, upon carne de macho cabrio (flesh of male goats), companions in misfortune with the singers of the Pope’s chapel. The most comfortable Manchegos have no other meat for their *puchero*; it is usually tough, and of a smell realizing the original perfume of the outraged animal to whom it belonged.

The Mancha is not, however, the least prolific of the provinces towards their head. The

red potato (*manchegá*) enjoys a fair and merited reputation for dryness, sweetness, and substance, resembling very much the kidney potato so esteemed by the Irish peasantry. A large supply of corn is drawn from its boundless plains. But, above all, who has not heard of the *rico vino de la Mancha* (the racy wine of the Mancha), the purple produce of Valdepeñas ? the straw-coloured nectar of Yepes ? Not content with such acceptable offerings, the industrious housewives send cart-loads of tender chickens, tough cocks, and gentle capons, not to mention the fat *gallinos* (hens), the older the better, if meant for broth. Eggs are not wanting to supply the usual breakfast of the citizens ; in fact, the Mancha behaves itself very genteelly *vis à vis* the metropolis.

Valencia culls her garden, and sends up the fruits of her favoured climate to stock the markets of Madrid. Pimientos, red and green, *tomatás* (love apples), artichokes, peas, every description of culinary vegetable seen in the early season, have travelled, night and day, on mule-back, or in large *galeras*, occupying five to six

days in the journey. Arragon and Valencia undertake the supply of oil and fruit necessary for the capital. The luscious *canniesa* (apple) of Calatuyud, pears and melons, and grapes of all hues and qualities, join company on the road, and hasten to be eaten in Madrid.

These are the staple offerings of the nearer provinces: the more distant send various little luxuries, such as cheese, sweetmeats, and butter; this last of a delectable taste and manufacture. Malaga sends boxes of raisins, oranges, and figs. Seville piques herself on her supply of oranges and *buenas mozas* (fine women), a very essential and scarce article among the Madrilenians, who are graceful, small, and "not pretty," as good looks are generally understood. Xeres offers her store of wines, excelling the excellent Madeira. The northern provinces forward their best wishes for good appetites and digestion. The coast of Biscay and Asturia does better; it sends out barks and fishermen, and remits its fish, over ninety leagues of ground, to Madrid. The fish-market, however, offers but little scope to the artist; the supply is precarious—a fall of snow, or other

accident, preventing the arrival in winter, and the heat in summer not always respecting the smell and taste. Cod and *vesugo*, the two most abundant species of fish in the market, may be had fresh and good from time to time. The establishment of a fish-cart *en poste*, from the coast, had improved this branch of industry, but the quantity was, of course, very limited for so large a consumption. The enterprise, like most other improvements, met with a great deal of difficulties and unfair opposition. Specious pretexts were set up, and old monopolies and rights were quoted, and, as is usual and indispensable, in all questions of law and equity, money was offered to and accepted by the umpires, to enlighten their judgments and direct their consciences. The fish-cart, however, continued to make its periodical appearance more or less frequently until the occurrences of the north (as they are quaintly termed) put an end to all communication with the sea. Madrid must now be content with *bacallao* (ling) and salted sprats, unless some bold adventurer expose his ears, and, perhaps, his life, to the

vengeance of the “facciosos” for daring to minister to the wants of a revolutionary city.

There are various market-places in Madrid, but no regular markets. They exhibit a hideous collection of clumsy, greasy, wooden booths, ranged in rows, leaving a very insufficient space for customers, and the refuse empty baskets, and other offal thrown at the base; each of these uncouth tabernacles is let out at so much per month or week, by the *ayuntamiento* (corporation), which is interested in the maintenance of this barbarous and unwholesome mode of sale. The swarms of flies and vermin created by the heat and want of cleanliness in summer, troops of homeless dogs in all seasons, fighting and running between the legs of passengers, the dust and puddle, altogether presents a most revolting spectacle to a foreigner.

The interiors of the boxes are occupied by the most gruff and uncivil tribe of venders and retailers in the world. Police regulations are supposed to exist, but they are never enforced. The venders are perfect masters of the how, the where, and the when of their business; they

raise or lower their prices *ad libitum*. The same article in the same market-place will bear three or four different prices. The *patronas* and housewives complain bitterly of the licence allowed to these publicans. My own *patrona*, Tomasa, declares, that heretofore no decent mistress of a house ever went to market, because they had wherewithal to pay a servant, but, now-a-days, they must do so, times are so altered. Jesus Maria ! it is a downright penance to enter a market-place. The *manolas*, who monopolize the sale of all manner of vegetables and fruit, are seated in formidable rows in every direction ; nothing escapes their tongue, or observation. “ I went, with my daughter, this morning, on our way from mass. What a tumult ! a *caballero*, very well dressed, was there, wrapped in his cloak, observing what was going on. He was, at once, set upon by those *desvergonzadas* (those barefaced creatures). Mirá que Señor, mira, chica, a, qué ussia. (See what a gentleman, look at his lordship, what a personage.) Pelon ! pelon ! (farthingless, farthingless !) He has tightened his cravat to

avoid hunger! some duke, no doubt! so says I to Ramonita, “Vamos a la casa, pues grulla aunque vayas con un pie! (home, home, Crane, although you hop upon one leg!)”

Various are the reports made to me by the same worthy dame, touching the want of honesty in the dealings, such as not returning change, insisting that nothing was paid for, serving customers as they themselves think fit, and not as the others wish; nor dare the latter resent this behaviour, by retiring without their purchase. There is a general league on the subject, it would be as much as her health was worth, to stand such a volley of imprecations and foul epithets as would immediately follow this determination. There seems no doubt of the shameful conduct of the tenants of the booths towards customers; it is the subject of general complaint with all such of the inhabitants as are obliged to attend to their own wants in the markets. Yet an alguacil is posted in each expressly to prevent such disorders, inspect the weights and measures, and take cognizance of all complaints. So far from

fulfilling his duty, however, he is the companion and favourite of the above-mentioned *mánnolas*; with them he repairs to the brandy shop, and receives from the other venders his perquisite for being deaf and blind on opportune occasions.

If the “most excellent *ayuntamiento* of Madrid” means seriously to enter into the ways of reform, one of its first cares should be to establish a new system of public markets. Even the dread of the cholera produced but little amelioration in their cleanliness. Some check should also be put to the brutal insolence of those who are licensed to serve the public for their money. Not long since, a butcher in the Rastro was arrested for having plunged his knife into the bosom of a customer, because the latter wished for another piece of meat than that which the assassin wished to sell him. Cases of this kind are of almost daily occurrence, and complaints are constantly being made to the police; but, hitherto, without any hope of redress. It may be said, with truth, that the populace of Madrid is the most brutal of any

in the world ; the most lawless, and the most independent in its actions, whether good or evil !

Were a stranger to judge from the municipal regulations, and the establishments expressly founded to maintain order and good faith in the public dealings, he would be edified and surprised at the prudence and foresight manifested by the authorities. But a very short residence will convince him that it goes no further than print, like so many other wise enactments on almost every possible subject. Here, in Spain, we enjoy two great gustos :—the first, in foreseeing and preventing, in well-rounded periods, abuses, and menacing their authors with condign punishment, the conditions whereof are duly and luminously set forth. The second is, in acting in direct opposition to those provisions, and when they are broken through, the shrugging up our shoulders “*Como ha de ser ? dejarlo !* (What’s to be done ? let it pass !) So be it with the markets of Madrid !

CHAPTER VIII.

El Ayuntamiento—The Corporation of Madrid.

THIS “most excellent corporation,” though not furnished with fat, pursy-faced aldermen, nor by any means prone to give turtle-soup, or addicted to wine and wassail, fêtes, and raree-shows, as in the good and ancient city of London, gives itself very great airs indeed. As a body, it enjoys the “tratamiento” (title) of “excellency,” and each individual is “your worship.” They assist punctually by deputation at the marriages, births, and baptisms of the royal family.

The corporation is supposed to watch over the wholesome quality of the provisions sold to the public, and the justice of the weights and measures. Its eye is also opened on the jewellers, to ascertain if their gold and silver be genuine.* It embraces, too, the department of cleanliness (*lucus a non lucendo*) throughout the capital; with many other duties, which are performed “a la bueno de Dios,” as God wills it, and not the most excellent corporation.

Not so with the “funds” of the city and its dependencies entrusted to their hands. These are closely looked to, and have been enlarged from time to time by the investments made by individuals in the corporation funds, at a certain rate of interest, when money was required by the corporation for any great municipal undertaking, such as the conveyance of

* Foreigners are astonished, and with good reason, that the English government permits the sale of that nondescript scandalous substitute for gold, called “jeweller’s gold,” which does not even stand the ordeal of aqua-fortis. It will rarely be taken, even in exchange for similar articles, abroad, where it is called “English compound.”

water to the city, the erection of public buildings, &c.

The bad faith of this body towards its creditors is without example. Not only is the interest of its debts not regularly paid, but none has been forthcoming for years. Hundreds of families, who invested sufficient sums of money to live respectably on the interest, are literally starving in consequence ; while “their worships,” unmindful of their obligations, are ready to squander away money on the most trivial occasions, and to offer fêtes and shews to royalty.* Had the Queen Regent been informed of the real state of their affairs, and the extent of the obligations they had contracted, she would have been the first to forbid the construction of monstrous arches of painted canvas,* wretched fire-works, and ridiculous public dances, and to direct the application of their funds to the more legitimate and honest purpose of paying their starving creditors.

* This eagerness, on their part, is so notorious, that the Queen Regent, whose good sense is well known, forbade, on one occasion, any “outlay” on such frivolities.

The “*junta de propiros*” (city fund commission) receives the revenues, which, between mortgages and property of various descriptions, are said to amount to eighty or ninety millions of reals (eight to nine hundred thousand pounds) a year, yet public works undertaken on their account advance slowly ; their payments are always in arrear.* Notwithstanding all the

* The carpenter who furnished the wood-work and scaffolding necessary for the “Royal Functions,” in the Mara on the Jura of the Princesa de Asturias, now Queen Isabel the Second, is not yet paid ; nay, the light web pantaloons of the “*señores los toreros*” (the combatants at the bull-fight) on that occasion, are still *pendientes* (unpaid for).

Among countless instances of the unmerited distress brought on by this flagrant dishonesty, that now experienced by two young ladies of good family shall alone be cited :—

Their father, an elderly man, who had taken notes during a long life on the conduct of his neighbours, came to the conclusion, at last, that there was very little confidence to be placed in men in general, and none at all in tutors and guardians of helpless children, as his daughters then were (anno 1803). He decided on vesting his capital in the corporation funds, which paid five or six per cent. interest, conferring the right on the fundholder of withdrawing his

dignities and distinctions enjoyed by the corporation in a public point of view, their worships would be but slenderly paid, if circumscribed to the *legitimo* (legal salary) of their places, which does not amount, on an average, to more than three pesetas (half-a-crown) a day. But is it to be supposed that those who hold the frying-pan by the handle do not neglect the improvement of their incomes ? The *encargado* of street-lighting "*reprobigratia*" adulterates and diminishes the quantity of oil allowed for the lamps, and no doubt makes a very pretty thing of it. The eyes of the greatest "*myopes*" can bear witness to the economy exercised in this department, if they are in the habit of being

capital by fixed instalments, on giving a month's previous notice. He died in 1809. His daughters are now in extreme want, though possessed of the most binding documents and titles of money funded, which ought to secure them an income of seventy thousand reals (seven hundred pounds) a year. They are but too happy to obtain at one period three or four hundred dollars ; at another, one hundred, &c. on account. "We have no money, we cannot pay you," is the constant answer. Still millions could be forthcoming on occasions to flatter the authorities.

out of their houses after twelve o'clock at night. It is doing one justice to his great proficiency in astronomical combinations to say, that the most cunning cannot deceive the inspector as to the hour and minute of the moon's rising and setting: he marshals his lamps and lamp-men accordingly.* Every country has its customs:— In England, it is a homely comparison, “as quick as a lamp-lighter;” in Spain, people would think you were quizzing them if you said so. Here the illuminating personage applies his ladder with all due precautions to the post before he adventures his person upon it. Nothing but putting you into jail, or seizing your valuables, is done quickly in this country; for these two operations they have every claim to a “patent.”

Next comes the director of odoriferous “car-

* The calculations of the Inspector were at fault in June, 1834. It was full moon, and he had given orders *not* to light the lamps; but he forgot that a little after dusk the total eclipse was to come on: this “desando” was not remedied until a late hour. On moonlight nights there are no lamps lighted, which leaves the inhabitants of narrow streets and high houses at the mercy of any nightwalker.

ros de vasura y aguas sucias," (carts of refuse and unclean waters), a most moderate appellation indeed, which yields a handsome and savoury profit. Indeed, the odour which penetrates your nostrils and clothes, and through the glasses of your carriage (if you have one), is, in itself, worth a "potosi;" what must be the value of the cause of this treat?* The whole neighbourhood, in process of evacuation, is untenantable while it is going on; no street in Madrid escapes this superabundance of the most pungent odours and abominations. Added to this, the rattling of eight or ten carts, and the noise of as many men shouting, *So-a-o!* to

* There is a general reservoir in all the districts of the town for the carrying off "unclean waters;" but the private houses can reap no advantage from it, owing to the want of sewers leading into it. The carts return to the "well" of each house once in five or six weeks. They cannot commence their operations until eleven o'clock at night, nor prolong them after five in the morning. It would not require a very large expenditure to establish proper communications from every house with the local reservoir, and preclude this barbarous and disgusting mode of reminding people of their mortality.

their mules every instant, and swearing at one another, are sufficient to keep the most drowsy person on the *qui vive* until daylight. It is quite natural that the functionary at the head of so much dirt, should have wherewithal to cleanse himself. He may say, with our own Henry, “Lo! the money doth not smell the worse for it.”

The inspector of the *empedrado* (pavement), who manages to make every stone or flag he puts down give him, on an average, at least a *peseta*, is deserving of the most condign punishment for the manner in which his duty is performed. The stones are placed with the angles and points upwards, so that a slip of the foot between two such flints makes even a gouty man skip like a young greyhound.

He of the fountains takes care that good water shall not go for nothing. The “worship” charged with the suppression of idleness and mendicity has too great a respect for qualities so inherent to the corporation of which he is an unworthy member, to meddle with them. The superintendent of eatables, it may

be taken for granted, is sufficiently alive to so essential a duty. His friends may be almost assured none of suspicious quality enter his kitchen; indeed, it would be hard, and very bad management if his *puchero*, *par de principios* (couple of *entrées*), his wine and *postres* (dessert) cost him an *ochavo*.

The director of the “*arbolado*” is the least comfortably portioned of the *quorum*. One cannot exactly see how he can extract money out of trees and shrubs; but, who knows? God is great! and his servant is no “*naranjo*.”*

Living, as we are said to do, in an age of reform, we must pass a sponge over those little peccadillos of “their worships,” in favour of the “*nuevo areglo*” (new arrangement) they say they are about to make with their numerous and starving creditors. The “Ayuntamiento” has also, of late, shewn itself more accessible to suggestions of public convenience and recreation; it has laid down new walks, planted the

* Naranjo, in Spanish, signifies an orange-tree, as well as “a booby,” or a “noodle.”

exterior* circuit of the walls, and erected new fountains, in place of the Gothic wooden market booths, previously encumbering their site. They have got a project in contemplation, and now ready for execution, which will do more for the comfort, salubrity, and appearance of Madrid, than any other measure adopted since the days of Charles III., namely, the construction of an aqueduct to bring the waters of the minor rivers springing from the foot of the Guadarama† in sufficient abundance to the

* The descent from the gate of Toledo, and that of the Moors, which will afford a Prado to the retired inhabitants of this quarter. This is the "*Marais*" of Madrid, distinguished by different hours, toilets, and manners, from the other quarters of the metropolis. Some young bridegrooms in this region go to be married in sharp-pointed shoes and silver buckles, white-thread stockings, short breeches, and bob-tailed coats.

† The water of the fountains in Madrid is renowned for its purity. They are supplied from the mountain streams, doubly filtered by the length of their course to the city. The new supply will, if possible, be of a better quality, the Mauzanares joining its tribute to the rest. The measure about to be executed was of the most absolute ne-

capital, to supply the old and new fountains, irrigate the suburbs, and fertilize the soil in its course. Proposals have already been made, and funds offered for the purpose; it is to be hoped, with a greater certainty of remuneration than heretofore. Several English gas-light contractors came to Madrid at different periods, to sound the corporation upon lighting the capital in that manner; but so many objections were raised—some plausible, others prompted by private views and interests—that the project, if it were ever seriously entertained, fell to the ground. Certainly, there are many other improvements more immediately claiming the attention of the Ayuntamiento. The inhabitants will, doubtless, forgive them not having embraced the offers of the gas company, if they

cessity in the summer of the year 1830. There was an alarming scarcity of water in Madrid; most of the fountains were actually dried up; and those which were not, yielded water in such small quantities, as to require a servant to wait from twelve to eighteen hours to fill, in his turn, a *cantaro* (a pitcher holding about two gallons).

will only realize half of what has been so much talked about, and so long projected.*

* The late king was very much in favour of the gas-light project. He directed a small gasometer to be built near the palace, for the service of the court-yards of the palace and Plaza del Oriente; this bauble cost originally, and still requires a great sum of money to maintain it. The objection which had most weight with the municipality against the adoption of gas, was, that it would deprive the country of the *sale of the oil* necessary for the lamps of the capital!

CHAPTER IX.

Puerta del Sol—Its Frequenters—Thieves and Shoeblocks
—The Panorama of the Puerta—The Dandies—The Military—The Mules and Asses—The Ladies and their Gallants.

THIS Orientally named spot has maintained, and still maintains, its renown for warmth and news ;*

* This original Moorish name has been founded, according to prosing chroniclers, in the singular predilection which the sun has ever manifested for this particular spot of the town. They adduce many grievously long proofs of sensibility in this great luminary. We shall content ourselves with the following scrap from Oviedo. “ It would appear that even this great planet, as if an animated being, comes forth to look at this town, over which he has dominion, on account of his position : not being able to bear living absent from it, as Fray Francisco, in Pereda, curiously observes in these

but, like other great things and people, its shew-time does not begin until a certain hour, and finishes the same. An attentive observer coming down the Red de St. Luis, or, as it may be, descending the Calle de Caretas, at any hour before twelve o'clock, would be tempted to ask, what was there to be found in so far-famed a place to excite attention or curiosity? The tasteless façade of a church,* the Casa de Correos, a four-faced look, or *cuatro esquinas* (four streets) terminating here, a "row" among the sons of Gallicia respecting the ancient right of drawing water, some flourishes of water-casks in the air, accompanied by the delicious screaming of a few *manolas*, encouraging or separating the combatants, followed by the necessary episode of a female squabble to see who was right; these are the usual events and casualties occurring at such unclassic hours.

words,—‘ and chiefly it is so favoured by the sun, that by a *maravilla* (a wonder) there is no day in which he is not seen ; for although it may be very cloudy and rainy, always in morning or evening one is sure of seeing the sun.’ ”

* The church of Buen Suceso, a great eye-sore to the gate of the sun.

Immediately that the arrow-head of the church clock points to the hour of noon, this memorable station begins to assume its daily importance. Any man without a watch (and the number here is not inconsiderable) may confidently regulate his business, not by the movements of the already-mentioned clock above, but by those of his fellow-citizens below.

The Calle de Caretas being built on a rising ground, this circumstance, and the height of the houses, serve to throw a lengthened shade over the ‘Puerta del Sol,’ until this luminary, after a great deal to do, manages to send a few scattered threads of light from behind the chimney tops and sections of streets more accommodating than that of Caretas. This hard task he accomplishes a few minutes before twelve. No Persian ever paid a more respectful obeisance and attention to the presence of the great planet, than the straggling soldiers of the great guard in the Casa de Correos.* Their *coup-d’œil* is so well regulated, from long habit and absence of flannel

* Chosen for this post as the most central spot in the town. Of course, the eagerness of sun-beams allude to the winter season, when it is particularly grateful.

waistcoats, that a minute, more or less, finds them collected in a group where the first sun-beam is seen to fall. This movement is the signal of general rendezvous for other amateurs, provided with brown *capas*, faced with cotton velvet, and round conic hats, with brims so well rounded upwards, as to lose no part of the solar influence. They occupy the most comfortable spot to settle the price of mules, goats, and horses—of charcoal from the mountains, bacon from the Estremaduras, and *garbanzos* from the fertile plains that produce them. Farther on, an animated knot of more high-minded blades, chat over the last robbery, whether *infra* or *extra* muros eulogiae, their *mozas* (mistresses), *trabujos* (blunderbusses) and horses ; these last, more generally, not paid for, rendering the impartiality of these cavaliers more conspicuous in praising so frankly property belonging to their neighbours. Operations are settled for the ensuing night ; they take measures to seduce, if possible, a frail *sereno*,* whose

* This nocturnal militia is, in general, not to be seduced. They are more honest, and decidedly more vigilant, than the guardians of the night (now happily superseded by the new police) in England. Their stipend is six reals a night,

co-operation may be necessary, or whose merits are merely to consist in being opportunely seized with an unconquerable lethargy at a given hour and place, or to be attracted to another street, rendered worthy of inspection from its profound silence. Next in rank and station, come the friends, relatives, and dependants of the Valenciano Catalan, and Maragato,* and other public

about fifteen-pence. They mount guard, one in each street, at eleven o'clock at night, armed with a pike and lantern. They remain until daylight in summer, and until six o'clock in winter. An active *sereno* usually doubles his salary by perquisites from shopkeepers to keep a vigilant eye upon their establishment; and by what they receive from persons obliged to rise early for business or travel. The articles found in the streets, and advertised in the *Divrio*, are also a fruitful source of profit. Robberies are, notwithstanding, of very frequent occurrence, but much oftener in the day-time than at night.

* Men who devote themselves to some particular branch of information necessary to the visitors of a large capital. One renders an account of the best lodgings; another of servants; a third of horses, dogs, geese, &c. &c. &c., selling different articles appertaining to their calling. Their stands are in the portals of houses in the neighbourhood: they live by the commission they receive from the owners of goods

notabilities; some to give notice of love, and widowed ladies wishing for *caballero solo* (a single cavalier), to answer the double object of paying the house rent, and keeping them company; others, to communicate their findings during the last twenty-four hours, and discuss the propriety of exchanging the article found against the hallazgo* to be offered in the “Diario.” This being an affair of conscience, they never act lightly upon it, but inevitably help themselves to the object, if offering an intrinsic value, guided by that old and veracious dictum, *mas vale un pajaro en la mano que un buytre volando* (a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush).

Although hardly worthy to be mentioned in

sold, or houses hired by their agency ; but, like other great firms, the original founders of their reputation depart this life, leaving their names to others not of their *tiersa* or country. The Maragatos are a singular race of people, in the mountains of Leon, living in an almost perfect state of independence. They are remarkable for their size and honesty.

* Recompence given to the finder.

such fair and honourable company, a few distinguished *limpia botas* (shoeblacks) swell the crowd, paying an assiduous court to the Catalan, the Day and Martin of the Spanish capital, and dispenser of boots to be cleaned, and clothes to be brushed in two or three *barrios*. Woe be to the shoeblack who presumes to indulge his taste for variety, by purchasing his brushes or cake of blacking elsewhere! Soon denounced to this potentate, he is punished for such *black* ingratitude, by a sort of ban, which drives him from all aristocratic boots, shoes, and garments, to the buskins of the *Rastro*, or the sharp-pointed shoes of the *tios* and *ordinarios* of the Calle de Toledo.

The arrow-head is, at this moment, covering the half-hour after noon with its shadow thus,
VI. Pray place yourself in the niche formed by that lamp-post and stone pillar, shielding the corner of the Calle del Carmen, where you will be safe from the wheels of the carriages, and altogether very comfortable, if you are alert enough to scare away the numberless dogs who always surround this pillar.

Look up, look down, the leading streets, every thing is stirring; the basking groups retreat into convenient corners, escaping from the roll of carriages and hoofs of horses; vehicles of every description, from the elegant landau to the most antiquated efforts of coach-building, begin to circulate in a sharp trot or ambling walk; their inmates bow and nod, and smile; fans are shaken, hats taken off, in the carriages and in the streets, with reciprocity of smile or grim. Is it not a hard condition of civilized man, that he cannot meet or salute an acquaintance without this degrading distortion of fibre and muscle? One *salam* of the East is worth all our bowing and teeth-shewing; which last exertion, if not belonging to a very good-natured expression of face, invariably looks spiteful, and more becoming quadrupeds than men.

Groups of *lechuginos* (dandies), the most useless animals in the creation, now saunter down the flagways to the common centre, where already begin to form their mantled and compact mass, those meritorious citizens,

justly called *padres de la patria* (fathers of their country), who assemble in circular groups to hear and communicate news, and bring majesty and ministers to a severe account for their neglect of the country and its interests, but more especially for the personal indifference exhibited towards themselves. Wandering sets of ill-combed, ill-washed, body-guards mix in the crowd, making it a matter difficult to decide whether there be more dirt or lace about them. Clubs of half-pay officers, easily known by their worn-out black stocks, beards of some days' growth, weather-beaten oil-skin *shakos* with bewildered *pompons* tottering out of the crown; these, with the faithful *capa*, too old and constant a friend to show a fair exterior, and the faded uniform beneath, complete the costume of many victims of oppression and injustice, though sometimes worn by unworthy blackguards, who, after wading to an epaulet or lace through the crimes of the last political reaction,* have, at length, been visited

* The army of the faith inundated the ranks of the regular forces with shoals of low characters, who rose to a

by the tardy justice of the executive, and turned out of the army.

These discordant groups gradually spread and mingle with the other *quidnuncs*, and present a parti-coloured crowd; cocked hats with or without gold or silver lace, those of rotund form, closely pressed together, relieved by an occasional though rare life-boat hat of some curate politicians; *canales*, *sombreros*, sheathed in velvet, red cockade, and aiguillettes dangling from the point; greasy brown *cachuchas* of lounging Gallegos, brilliant hand kerchiefs on Valencian heads; red, and white, and green, and yellow “pompons” starting from the crowns of military caps and helmets; afford you a spectacle which you can never hope to see elsewhere. Equality reigns despotically

rank in the service as disproportioned to their services as to their former situation. This evil has been gradually remedied, so far as active service is concerned, but the country must continue to pay this host of disreputable adventurers on the same footing as it does its best defenders. This is one of the causes which increase the disorder in the finances of Spain.

throughout ; here all go and come, elbow and are elbowed, *con toda franqueza*; even the dumb creation gather to this favoured region. The *borricos* of the *arrieros*, taking advantage of their masters' absence, enticed by the sun-beams and probability of picking up some salad leaves, scattered near the fountain, stroll down from various directions, some with pack on back, others more at their ease, and nuzzle through the crowd, long accustomed to admit this familiarity;* mules, with their jingling head-stalls, join occasionally the company, but evidently despising a *borracho* acquaintance. The very swine have their representative here, in the shape of an enormous pig, boxed up in the corner of the Calle Montera, flanked by a shed where he is put up to lottery, and raffled

* The *arrieros*, when engaged in their avocations, habitually leave their mules and asses loose in the streets. Their loss sometimes reminds them of their imprudence, but instances of this kind are rare. An ass is not looked upon as a nuisance in a Spanish crowd ; people step on one side to let him pass, as they would for any Christian.

for at the equitable price of four cuartos each ticket, for the benefit of the children of the foundling hospital.

The fair sex, ever kind-hearted and prepossessing, contribute to animate and grace the scene with their presence, gliding past, throwing a glance, and wielding a fan, with their own unrivalled perfection. The reunion of shops in the Calle del Carmen draws bevies of simpering damsels and veteran matrons this way; if you will have the goodness to stretch your neck a little more forward from the nook, and take in, at a view, the Calle de Caretas and Montera, you will see the light forms of the daughters, supported and watched in the rear by prudent mothers, hovering for a moment on the turn of the sloping descent, like doves wheeling in the air before they venture to fix upon a resting place. Then begins the ordeal, for such it would be, to less practised combatants. The inexperienced would take it for the mere passage through an idle crowd. But matrons know the wily ambush prepared for their offspring in almost every shop, from the Café de

St. Luis downwards : crowds of young fops and ancient idlers all lie in wait for their passage ; establishing videttes after the wary custom of crows when plundering a cherry-tree or corn-field, who give due notice when any thing rich in the female line is coming in their direction. The most barefaced of the party gives the signal, and places himself in the middle of the flagway ; a dozen heads, from twenty years of hair to sixty, instantly pop out of the doorway, and are followed by the rest of the person in a trice ; the tribunal is established. While the most charm-struck prepare their store of gallant *requiebros* (tender sayings) for the approaching beauty, she, with eye askance, and fan unfurled, is already prepared to meet the onset. So many *caballeros* are intent on getting out of her way, that her progress is impeded altogether. Then shower down, “Bendita sea ! vaya un cuerpo ! es quanto cabe ! oy ! que ojuelos ! pichoncita !” and various other turtling sayings falling like sugar-plums on every side of her.

The other shops pour forth their contents ,

who manœuvre in the same scene ; and thus she is escorted and adulated as far as the turn into the Calle del Carmen, where, like a stately vessel, triumphant over the storm, she furls her sails and lets go her anchor, that is, she sinks into a chair in the accustomed shop, fans herself even to the wafting of her curls in the artificial breeze, and declares aloud that men have become *muy pesados y fastideoros* (exceedingly dull and impertinent) ; though not ill-pleased the while.

Now that the Puerta del Sol, and its immediate neighbourhood, are at the full tide of population, you may lend an ear to the conversations going forward. In that group of body guards I hear the words *Havana puro, brazos terribles*, and *buena moza*,—the speaker meaning to convey to his comrades the belief of his smoking as good cigars as the late king, as long and as bulky ; that his horse, which he is not permitted to mount, except when upon duty, has an admirable forehead ; and that he has subdued the pride and heart of a delicious, incomparable creature. Another is busy offering his cocked

hat to the minute inspection of the rest. “Parece nuevo” (it appears new).—Chico! “I got it turned this morning for three pesetas.” “Vaya! que barato!” (Oh! how cheap!) exclaimed the chorus, bareheaded, by unanimous impulse, to ascertain if their own castors were susceptible of the same improvement. These occupations, and contracting what the French call significantly “Poufs,” may be considered the utmost effort of general body-guard intellect.

These half-dozen officers of the foot-guards are equally taken up with the subject before them. They are discussing the cut of the new uniform, and affronted at the introduction of the shako, “leaving us little officers of the line with our heads cropped as bare as the hand. We shall be good-looking fellows! I declare, señores, I have not been out of the house since the order was given, I feel so ashamed of myself. One looks like a *pajaro* (a bird), or lord knows what; now that they have taken the hat, let them take the lace, let us be all of a piece.” It is a trifle to what is doing in the corps,—

the guards are no longer the same; everybody is now admitted—such figures from the line! and then destroying our seniority and promotion!” They all agreed to send the general who so ordained it, to that place where Dante advises his friend to lose all hope, and make a *novena* to invite the cholera to pay him a lasting visit. “Pero,” observed a reflecting character, “el diablo siempre cuida de los suyos” (the d—I always takes care of his own).

“When is this ministry to fall, I should be glad to know?” said a sallow disappointed man, with his cloak up to his eyes. “No business done, none absolutely. I, who am talking to you, have a *solicitud pendiente* for these three months. When are those *holgazanes* (lazy people) to be sent about their business?” “*Que se yo?*” (What do I know about it?) was the cautious reply of his neighbour. For it is one of the advantages of this country, and especially of the capital, to have so many *pretendientes*, so many doors open to intrigue, that, not unfrequently, friends who meet together every day, have views and interests which they carefully

conceal from one another ; and, as all ministers are good if they serve them, until the object of their attack falls, no one dares frankly to state his real opinion of his merits. The result of the glance, on the present occasion, was not satisfactory ; only one voice was heard to say, “Buena trucha !” (A good trout for sure !)

“ Well, well! señores,” continued the first speaker, “ I see you are all afraid to speak ;—all in good time. Thank God, I have more blood in my veins than that. Besides, I know where I get my news from. He is out to a certainty· con treinta mil demonios ! (with thirty thousand devils !) Not that I have much to complain of, although it must be well known to you all, that the employment I looked for was the justest thing in the world. I rejoice, for the country’s sake, I am a true patriot. Notwithstanding, how exactly that little place would have suited me ! I had every thing prepared. I say nothing of twenty pounds of the best Saragozza chocolate, of boxes of sweetmeats, cigars, and, *entre hermanos* (between brothers), what is really enough to drive an honest man mad, two man-

tillas of Lyons lace.” “Que ricos!” (How rich!, “They cost me, brought here to Madrid, three thousand reals (thirty pounds) a-piece; and all this thrown away among agents, and clerks, and understrappers. There is that *picaro* (jade), Dolores, *que me besava como a un santo christo*, (who kissed me as she would a holy crucifix,) on receiving one of the mantillas. She swore my business was as sure as if I had my nomination in my pocket: trust to people after that. How that scapegrace, Pepe, the *escribiente*, savoured the torones and some flasks of curaçoa I was idiot enough to send him. I saw him this morning. Had he not the impudence to tell me that now he had reflected maturely on my affair, his only surprise was how I could ask for such things? if I was in my right senses? “*Ha visto usted?*” (Was there ever anything like it?) cried the whole Corrillo, emboldened by the confident tone of the jilted speaker. “I shall spend at least thirty reals in oil lamps for my balconies,” said one; “I have seen more innocent men dragged through the streets.” “This hand shall punish him,” exclaimed a second: “Did he not

tell my *rita*, only three days ago, that her presence was more wanted at home than in his anti-chamber ? now is my turn.” Just as *capas* were unrolled, and gesticulation commenced, and anathemas and old griefs were hurled in quick succession against the devoted head of the disgraced minister, a friend stepped into the circle, and informed them with a very long face, that there was no truth in the report—that the minister stuck closer to his place than ever. That he had * * * *. But the latter part of this speech was addressed to idle air ; a bomb-shell, fallen at the feet of the enraged politicians, could not have produced a more scattering effect than this piece of intelligence. It may be safely surmised that not one of the party enjoyed a facile digestion that day.

That solemn group of cavaliers with cloak (*embozada*), and crimson silk umbrellas in their hands ; the majority with black silk nightcaps pulled over their ears, and little red cockades stuck inside their hatbands, indulging in an atmosphere of smoke from papilla, papaleta, and puro, is an areopagus of Carlists. “ Pretendiente

(Pretender) they call him, do they?" said the elder of the junta, a very bilious-looking personage indeed.—"A coward, too? *now* what will they do? Let *them* think so, and *her* too. (Here he rolled his eyes about in all directions—the coast was clear.) Ay, and *her* too. I knew how it would be. Look at His Majesty, springing like a chamois from rock to rock in Navarre, encouraging his faithful vassals—a good prince and Christian. He will prove both yet, Oh thou *obiedos de Dios* (detested of God). He will make them dance a wild fandango yet? If they have not a good winter's work before them, I never opened a door for His Majesty, nor will again; if not, time will tell. I am a poor man, and with a family; but the half of my salary is for him, were I to eat 'sopas' for the rest of my life."* "So say we all, cavaliers!" resumed an ex-equerry of Don Carlos. "Fray

* Such is the excited feeling of the "obscure," or extinguishing party, that a large proportion of the employés, active and passive, contribute one half of their salaries to the support of the rebellion. What a pity that such perseverance does not aid a better cause!

Anselmo, whom you all know, cheered my heart this very morning. What glorious news! I gave him ten reals Limosner in consequence of it. The marriage contract is signed between our master's son and the daughter of the Russian.* It is as true as the palace clock! The curse of God is pursuing the apostate usurper, Don Pedro—he is dying, or dead. Wait a little, you will see what a *remolino* (roundabout) will be got up in Portugal—with the blessing of God and the Virgin, and plenty of money, we shall see! Diu Bled Biev Don Juan, you are right! The Eng-

* The usual mode of allusion to foreign crowned heads and nations among illiterate people like the actual spokesman. El Russo is taking the part for the whole.—The Russian is coming, &c. It is, however, a received opinion among the rebels, among their supporters in Madrid, and all over Spain, that the period is at hand when the Russian is to settle matters, put the crown on the head of Charles the Fifth, and chains and stripes on the bodies of all dissentient persons. It makes an Englishman blush to hear the names of some of his countrymen sounded as pillars of this iniquitous cause. Even though they be Tories in England, they should recollect they were Englishmen in Spain.

lish are also getting tired of their *descamisados*, and will change their ministry. Wellington ! he is great man—he is our friend. *Fuera sayas!* (no petticoats!) and long live Zumalacarregui ! He is beating them like flax, invent as they will. And Mina ? *vaya*, an old *gata montes* (mountain cat) with his claws cut, he is broken down.”

Much more of such interesting news would have been forthcoming, had not a numerous charge of poodle dogs, brilliantly executed from the door of the *posada* de la Gallina vieja (of the old Hen), in search of the balls purposely thrown among the debating club of Carlists, nearly overturned them all ; a feat of some graceless stable boys, who could be but little better than “tragalistas.” Umbrellas, sticks, and imprecations were in operation at the same moment. “*Provida del Otro!*” (By the life of the other Thursday!) they will all hang yet. Who is the rogue that has done it ?” The knot was untied ; and the sound of the bugle, announcing the Queen’s approach, dispersed the confidants until a snugger opportunity. The crowd pressed to see her pass ; the carriage

darted by, preceded by a single outrider, her Majesty lavishing her bewitching smile upon the shouting populace. *Viva la Gobernadora, viva Isabel!*

The arrow of the Buen Suceso clock is pointing to the hour of two, warning those who have a dinner prepared, to go and eat it, and those who have not, to set their wits to work to obtain one. Some plate-hunters try the effect of a lively anecdote, as they accompany the father of a family homewards; others invent a piece of news they conceive will interest or flatter the hearer. But the door is reached, and no invitation, not even the freezing and always to be refused "*Guste usted comer con migo?*" (Do you wish to dine with me?) They would have taken it literally had it been hazarded. "Hola! Don Fausto—vaya! I am such a *calavera* (rattle-pate)." I have an engagement at the Café del Comercio with some young fellows, who all esteem you as I do. Would you believe it? I have forgotten my money at home;—have you any small change—a dollar?—any thing till we meet?" The hand

of Don Fausto appeared from beneath his cloak with a *peso duro* in it. “Tome Usted” (excuse my frankness); and the Spanish Jeremy was out of sight in a moment. “Pugh!” muttered Don Fausto, “after all, it is better to lose a dollar than have that scapegrace sitting at my table, and talking with my daughters! *que vaya en hora mala!** (let him go to the d—l).”

The vendors of cakes and oranges, and any other portable merchandize, are busy collecting their unsold goods; the *asnos* and mules are gradually sought for and carried off by their owners. The dashing of the waters of the fountain is distinctly heard through this mid-day silence. The *gallegos* on the watch at their barrels; the sentry at the post office; a peasant rolled up in his cloak, and taking his *siesta* in the shade; are the only signs of animated existence in the “Gate of the Sun.”

* The order of “Industry” is a knighthood pretty generally spread over Europe. Madrid boasts of some dexterous members, but in this, as in many other vices of higher civilization, the Spaniards are far behind their other European brethren.

At nightfall it again recovers a shadow of its morning bustle. Ambulating coffee-shops, *orchateros* from Valencia, ply their noisy calling; tables, illuminated with paper lanterns, offer cakes, and bread and biscuits to the hungry or capricious; the passage to the theatres and post-office, all serve to enliven the neighbourhood. The shopkeeper's *tertulia*, seated in the doorway, where the guitar is a constant help to pass away the evening; the song and applause after it; the numerous lights and confusion of voices until midnight; make the Madridians say, that even at night it is still the Gate of the Sun.

CHAPTER X.

The Casa de Correos, or Post-Office.

THIS department is the only branch of public administration well conducted in Spain. In spite of numerous abuses, and a sad lack of intelligent combination in the service, and desire to accommodate the public, it would be happy for the country were all parts of her public business equally well-managed.

The edifice itself, is of an imposing mass and character, forming a vast isolated square. The interior is equally divided into two *patios* or

court-yards, surrounded by covered porticos. The entrance is defective, it being necessary to mount six or eight steps to reach the ground floor, thereby preventing the entrance of carriages,—a disadvantage which might have been easily remedied in the first instance, notwithstanding the inclined plane upon which it is built. Still the external appearance of the Post-office is noble, and well suited to a great public establishment, despite the narrow street de Postas, and the too great vicinity of the *Covachuelos*.* There is no luxury of carriages and cattle bounding from the gateway as in London, when the hour of departure strikes. The diligences and malas † of the establishment

* *Covachuelos*, subterraneous shops under the terrace of the convent of San Domingo el Real, a favourite place of resort for children and their nurses, being the “sole dépôt,” not of *Eau de Cologne*, but of drums, trumpets, tumblers, soldiers, sabres, horses and carts, and toys of all descriptions. A promise to go to the *Covachuelos* puts the boldest on his good behaviour. These shops spoil the appearance of the street and post-office.

† Both Spanish Diligences and Malas “Malle-poster” are much more commodious and better hung than those of

put up in the premises immediately behind the great building, and are drawn up to the postern

France ; kept considerably cleaner, and surpass them altogether in their rate of travelling. Eight years ago, there was but one wretched old-fashioned carriage from Bayonne to Madrid, and *vice versa*—ill served, and requiring seven days to perform the distance. Now, all the principal roads are well served. From Madrid to Valencia, Barcelona, Seville, Cadiz, Badajoz, Valladolid, Corunna, Saragosa, the traveller will find excellent travelling, and, considering the small number of passengers hitherto frequenting those roads, very tolerable inns. The Royal Diligence Company deserve every credit and encouragement for the rapidity with which they have spread this important mark of civilization over the leading points of the kingdom. The fares are moderate ; a tariff is also established for each meal, the only objectionable condition being the obligation on each passenger to pay the full amount, or nearly so, even should indisposition prevent you from participating in the good cheer. The company, however, allege, and with some reason, that if this were not the case, no inn could support itself, in the uncertainty of the appetites or inclinations of the passengers ; and as the landlord of the *posada* is obliged to have food prepared for a certain number of individuals, he must be assured beforehand of reimbursement. Where none but travellers by the Diligence frequent a road, this plea has considerable weight.

door at midnight, the usual hour of starting, unless some particular occupation of the ministry's retard it a few hours later.* But it is only on the Bayonne and Portuguese lines of road that the bags are conveyed in this way ; taxed carts, or postilions, transport the correspondence along all the other roads.

The Spanish system of distributing letters to the public is peculiar, and present some advantages, accompanied by one great defect. The letters are divided into three portions or classes : —first, those bearing a specific address of street and house ; second, those simply directed to Madrid ; third, the letters of military men.

The first are delivered by the postman, in the usual way. The second are arranged in

* Hitherto, at least, the public is “nobody” in Spain. Government made no scruple of stopping the regular traveller in Diligences, in order to accommodate a great personage, or for any other object. The business and interests of those, who, counting on the usual routine, had taken their places, were never thought of. It was the same in every other respect. This æra of illustration will no doubt correct so crying an abuse.

lists alphabetically, according to the Christian names of the parties, placing those to females in a separate column. Those of military men undergo the same classification. These ample lists are pasted on long boards, and suspended to the pillars on each side of the porticos, for the inspection of the public. This plan affords facilities to friends at a distance, who may not know the address of their correspondents, especially in a town, where it is not uncommon to see whole families change their house once or twice a year, and sometimes oftener, as caprice suggests, or new houses spring up.* This

* There has been for some years a house-mania in Madrid, as there was in Paris, during the years 1826 to 1829. A new house is scarcely plastered and painted, when it is already bespoken and taken. The desire to escape from those pestilent little animals called bugs, which are so abundant in Madrid, may also contribute, in some degree, to this eagerness for new houses. These are so slightly run up, however, and so much wood enters into their construction, that the deliverance from this plague is but of short duration; the summer heat cracks the ceilings, and enables them to renew their inroads. The number of new houses built within the last four years, and still building, at

system insures the delivery of a letter simply directed to the capital, with as much certainty as one indicating the private residence of the party; as every body goes or sends to examine this list.

Besides those of daily arrivals, there are lists from time to time exhibited of two other classes of letters, viz., those returned by the postmen owing to their not having discovered their owners, or from incorrect addresses; second, the unclaimed correspondence, *atrasada* (in retard), any letter not called for during the interval from one post-day to another, is again inscribed in the unclaimed list, and set apart. This list (in which each letter has a number attached to it, by which, and the address, it is called for) is divided by weeks, until a month has elapsed from their first arrival, after which all that remain uncalled for, are thrown into the general mass of ‘dead letters,’ and burnt at the end

Madrid, is enormous. The town does not gain, however, so much in extent, as it does in appearance and symmetry, as the new buildings generally replace old ones pulled down.

of the year, in front of the post-office. Distinct lists are also made of letters from abroad, and from the American Spanish colonies. This method is so clear, compendious, and convenient, that there can be no difficulty in at once discovering a stray letter even of an old date; it allows a number of people to satisfy their anxiety at the same moment, and saves them a considerable time, dispensing with the necessity of waiting at a narrow entrance or window, until, one by one, they had asked an over-burthened clerk if they had letters or not.

The time and hands required for the formation of so many and such formidable lists, may be an objection against the adoption of this plan. But the great defect of it, is the perfect facility which it affords to the designing and ill-intentioned to possess themselves of the correspondence of any party on the lists, by demanding it and paying the postage. Many severe losses and domestic calamities might be traced to this incorrect practice under the late reign, a period when nothing was sacred from suspicion and calumny. The ‘secret of letters’ is not more

respected here than in most other countries of the Continent ; but this office has, at least, the merit of doing the thing openly, or, at least, so clumsily, that there can be no doubt on the subject. Sometimes, letters are delivered to the owner open altogether, which is certainly being frank and above board.

Postage is luckily more moderate in Spain than in any other country in Europe ; I say luckily, taking into account the decided turn for writing and scribbling that pervades the whole nation. The fair sex set no bounds to their passion for letter writing. Once they do commence a correspondence, there is no getting out of it, unless by an open rupture. They give full scope to their vivid imaginations, and even should orthography be sometimes a little startled, yet the passionate sentiments contained in a letter really dictated from the heart, compensate every other error. Naturally eloquent, they wield the pen with grace and facility, and dip its point in traits of fire when passion awakens their energies.

This scribbling propensity swells the revenue

of the post-office to a very large amount, and makes it the most profitable branch of the administration, notwithstanding the heavy burdens saddled upon it.* A long course of abuses rendered this department so independent of every other, as to constitute a sort of corporation within itself. Though nominally dependent on the minister of state, the directors and administrator of the provinces paid but little attention to any orders not directly emanating from their immediate superiors, especially if these orders related to improvements, opening another line of communication, or economizing on one

* Pension-hunters always endeavoured to have their pensions made payable on the Correos, where they were sure to get their money. The length to which abuses of this kind were carried is incredible. Since the centralization of the treasury, none of the public departments ought to possess any distinct funds,—a change which will prevent much future dilapidation. The Cortés deserve well of their country, if they show a vigorous determination to cleanse the Augean stable of abuses comprised in the Pension list alone. But so many interests are combined in maintaining a “*statu quo*,” that we hardly dare hope for such a result.

already adopted—“*se obedece, pero no se cumple*” (the order is obeyed, but will not be executed) is a principle acted up to with true Spanish phlegm.* The post-office is now amalgamated with the ministry of the Interior, and will receive a better and more uniform direction, as well as effect a more rapid communication of correspondence. There is no line of post in Spain which

* One instance among a thousand will suffice. The post-bag is carried by contract from Vittoria to Pamplona. Although the mail reaches Vittoria at five in the afternoon, the letters for Pamplona do not arrive there until the next day at two o'clock, a distance of only fourteen leagues. The post-master of Pamplona represented this neglect more than once to the heads of the department, and pointed out its remedy. The actual contract cost eighteen thousand reals (one hundred and eighty pounds) a year; he undertook to get the business done for eight thousand (eighty pounds), and that the post should arrive every morning in Pamplona at daybreak, both in summer and winter. This representation was not only slighted, but he himself was requested to keep his counsels to himself until they were sought for. The fact was, the post-master put the extra ten thousand reals into his own pocket, and naturally thought it would be very cruel to deprive him of such a trifle.

might not be served in half the time now employed. Long and useless delays on the road prove a total absence of intelligence in the organization of the country cross-bags, some of which take four or five days to reach a distance of easy travelling in fifty hours. New arrangements are said to be in contemplation, and the public have the satisfaction of being sure beforehand that they cannot possibly be worse than those hitherto adopted.

The porticos of the post-office offer a rich mental treat to any one at all curious in various reading and writing on the most opposite subjects. *Avisos* (advertisements), important announcements to the public from an Italian professor, just arrived from some distant land. His philanthropy (and not hunger) brings him to the most heroic capital in the universe. He is determined (and has secured the royal assent) to cure all men, the poor gratis, of an afflicting malady. Samples of the wishes and writings of a host of young *barlieros* and *estudiantes*, setting forth their fervent wishes of meeting with some worthy cavalier for a master, with only the con-

dition of permitting their absence for two or three hours in the morning, (of course after he had got his chocolate) to follow their studies and *humanidades*. Others are more modest and youthful, all *jovenes* (striplings) of sixteen, eighteen, or twenty years; these suppliants declare themselves equally ready to serve a señora who wants a young and active *famulo*. These petitions, written out in their best style of penmanship, conclude with the information, that *si gusta la letra es del interesado* (if this writing pleases, it is that of the adventurer), who will be heard of at the Catalan's, exactly opposite the "Buron" of the post-office.

There is room for sundry little scraps of paper stuck and wafered underneath the lists, of *cabalberos* having taken such a letter and number by *equivocacion* (mistake), and, instead of bringing it back, requests the dueño (owner) will take the trouble of going to look for it at his house!

On the day of general delivery it is not an unamusing scene to observe the crowd disputing and crushing for places near the pillar on which the list of that day's post is suspended. The far greater number, as usual in such cases, have no

business there, further than to see what is going on, augment the confusion, and perhaps to pick their neighbour's pocket.* *Capas*, and cocked hats, and castors of every form and description, mantillas, and, now and then, a faded bonnet, are all huddled together, and so determined on getting a sight of the names, as to obstruct reciprocal vision altogether. When they do succeed in getting to the first row, the undulations maintained by the shoulders and elbows of those behind, make it a difficult task to decipher your object. While thus occupied, it is a usual thing to see a young *gallego* or son of Asturia thrust his broad red cheeks from the mass, and holding forth a slip of paper with the name of his *amo*

* Though some improvement has certainly been made of late years, in the mode and manner of picking pockets in Madrid, it must be confessed that the Spanish professors are still at an immeasurable distance from their French and English prototypes. In Spain, a man must be of absent habits indeed to have his pockets picked. You feel the hand going in, and the handkerchief, or whatever it may be, taking leave; a plain unsophisticated theft, with no grace or genius about it.

or *ama* (master or mistress) written upon it, trouble you to let him know, as soon as possible, if it is to be found in that host of names, thinking it quite natural that you should neglect your own business to attend to his ; others, trusting to their good memory alone, stretch forth one hand, catch you by the arm or skirt of the coat, and bawl out “ Do you hear ? is there a letter for Don —— ? ” and “ Pray excuse me.” Obliging persons are to be found, having no object there of their own, and who, though spelling writing with difficulty, are always ready to lend their services to such illiterate messengers ; to make sure of matters they run their forefinger up and down the columns, to the great annoyance of the eager expectants behind ; mistakes several names for the right. “ Ho ! that is not it, eh ! Well, let us look again,” and he recommences his finger-travels. A young girl, out of breath, comes up, and, in a hurried voice, asks the same favour ; but she looks so anxious, and blushes so deeply, that you discover at once on what subject her correspondence turns. Pray let the answer be given in a low tone of voice, not to bring the

piercing wandering eyes from under those rusty hats, and from behind those brown mantles, to bear upon her, her clear complexion, and homely mantilla, bound with cotton velvet.

Other females, more advanced in life, with demure made up faces, also pry about the list, prudently waiting until the press is over: these are the duennas and doncellas, people of confidence, come on the behalf of young persons, seldom deserving the trust reposed in them, to bring back the precious letter to their mistress, and sometimes, though not often, to their master.*

In the summer time, the post-office arrogates to itself some part of the honour and im-

* I never heard of but one well authenticated instance of treachery of this kind, practised by a maid towards her mistress. She delivered the letters destined for the wife to the husband, which produced the most deplorable consequences in the family. In general, they are faithful messengers, although trustworthy in no other point than this, which, it would seem, is one of honour. Besides, it is said that women find a pleasure in conspiring against the peace of married men.

portance of the Puerta del Sol. The “quidnuncs” assemble in its shade, and listen with avidity to *bolas* of some gifted news-maker. A *corillo* of citizens listening, or endeavouring to catch the sense of the “parte” comment in a *gaceta estraordinaria*, would not be a bad subject for a painter. On this neutral ground every man is acquainted, with or without previous knowledge. Have you had the good fortune to name a copy for yourself? in an instant you have an *amigo* you never saw before looking over your shoulder, who, being rather short-sighted, takes out his spectacles, seizes a corner of the paper, and keeps you from turning it over until he has done. The circle by this time is respectable, and all cannot read it with their own eyes. “Read it out, man,” they call; if you do not, you are set down as a *botarete*; if you do, the last sentence is hardly out of your mouth before you are completely deserted. What of it? they wanted the news, not you: you may just do the same with *cada hijo de vicino* (each son of a neighbour), on the first opportunity.

CHAPTER XI.

The Prado.

ALTHOUGH, to my great regret, I may now be looked upon as one of the “elders of the people,” I am not aged enough to recollect the ancient laying out of this famous walk, so celebrated in old Spanish songs and romances. We know, from tradition, of its having been a wild and desert waste, full of hollows, and nooks, and hiding places; often the scenes of blood and courtship, for where there is

woman, blood is not far off, says the old “*refran.*” Here used to hie the proud hidalgo, with his trusty “*toledo,*” prompt to revenge some slight done to himself, or preference shown by a jilting mistress to a bold rival. The dubious hour of dusk was wont to show various forms wrapped in cloak or female mantle, gliding mysteriously towards this other Thebaïde ; the *doncella* bearing the perfumed billet to the impatient cavalier, or the already vanquished beauty hastening with a beating heart to her lover’s arms. The modest moon, I fear me, had to witness strange doings in that wilderness : echo, it is said, was not always busy with amorous accents ; the murmurs of tenderness, the clash of rapiers, and the groans of the dagger’s victim, were not unfrequently borne together on the same breeze.

The extreme vicinity of the court, at that period almost constantly resident in the *Retiro*, made this extensive waste a convenient theatre for political and amorous intrigue, and well calculated for the indulgence of the revengeful passions usually attendant upon both. Quiet

and well-disposed people, whose swords and blood love to repose in vein and scabbard, ought to feel grateful to the great and worthy king, the Señor Don Carlos the Third, for having turned his royal attention to their security. This cut-throat region was cleansed, and cleared, and levelled by his orders, in the time of the good minister Count d'Aranda, who scared away such bad company, and made the Prado what it now is;—the resort of all sorts of people wanting to see and be seen; young girls, wanton wives, languishing widows, beardless puppies, adulterous youth, and *ci-devant* young men, who go there merely to think what they would do if they could; besides a great crowd of exceedingly proper persons of both sexes, who walk about there on purpose to be scandalized and confirmed in “the right path,” and, good resolutions, by the sight of so much *lujuria*, or yearning after sinful and perishable enjoyment.

This superb promenade begins at the Convent of Atocha, passing before the gate of the same name, turns to the right, runs up to the street

of Alcalà, crosses it, and extends as far as the gate of the *Recoletos*. The whole extent may be calculated at about nine thousand seven hundred feet. An ample carriage-road runs through the middle, flanked on each side by the avenues destined for pedestrians, and bordered with large and shady trees. In the centre of the walk, comprised between the *Carrera San Geronimo* and the street of Alcalà, its width is considerably increased, forming a fine “Saloon” fourteen hundred and fifty feet long, by two hundred feet broad. On either side, remarkable buildings, views of the various streets that run into it, flourishing gardens, and eight handsome fountains, contribute to enhance the beauty of this favourite resort.

Although the fountains just mentioned are all of more or less merit, by their design and execution, those of Neptune, Apollo, and Cybele, are the most worthy of a detailed description. The first, by Juan de Mena, represents the marine deity standing in his car drawn by two sea horses, with dolphins playing before it; the whole is well finished, and has a good effect,

notwithstanding the somewhat ludicrous appearance of the sea-shell car, horses and dolphins, galloping and swimming, not through the brine as they ought, but over hard stones. This defect is owing to a mismanagement in the original placing of the centre group ; the base should have been at least from four to five feet lower, which would have brought it below the surface of the basin, and placed the group on the water level, as it should be. In the centre of the “Saloon” stands the grand fountain of Apollo, of a chaste and tasteful architecture ; the water falls from one vase or sculptured basin into another, soothing the ear with its dash and harmonious murmur. Manuel Alvarez, an able sculptor, has the merit of the whole design : the fountain presents two fronts exactly similar ; four statues of the seasons, looking towards the four cardinal points, adorn the upper part ; the statue of Apollo surmounting and completing this fine monument of better days. The magnificent fountain of Cybele, celebrated for the salubrity of its waters, is situated in the street of Alcalà,

fronting the “Saloon.” The goddess is seated in a lofty car, drawn by lions; a colossal mask spouts water from the mouth into a large circular basin. The execution of this group is well worthy of the admiration of the connoisseur. Ventura Rodriquez, the city architect, traced and made the drawings of all these fountains, although they were executed by the artists we have named. He presented, at the same time, a very clever plan of a peristyle or portico, to be erected before the royal stables of the Retiro (now the artillery barracks), almost in front of the statue of Apollo, which would have done away with the ungainly appearance of that spot, and afforded shelter to at least three thousand persons in case of a sudden shower, besides containing sufficient space for the establishment of a coffee house, and large terrace overhead for the orchestra, whenever their Majesties honoured the Prado with their presence. Had this idea been realized, it is certain that no other public walk in Europe could have disputed the palm with the Prado. It still must be a matter of surprise that the

authorities have never thought of gratifying the public on feast days with a band of music. The abundance of water in the Prado not only adds to the attraction, but maintains the vigour and verdure of its plantations, by means of a narrow gutter, six or eight inches deep, and carried round each trunk. As fast as the water is dried up, a fresh supply is introduced, the effect of which, during the summer droughts, gives an extraordinary degree of life and freshness to the foliage of such favoured trees, while their less fortunate neighbours are scorched and withered by a relentless sun. Water-carts*

* Within the last four or five years the usual form of water-carts has been adopted, with the exception of the spout, managed as described in the text. Spaniards certainly have this advantage over other nations—that they never tamely imitate their improvements, but always preserve something original, exclusively their own. In the present instance, an animated appearance is given to an otherwise dull machine, by the stout fellow dangling out from it at a rope's length. A perforated shower-muzzle would be infinitely more simple, and save the hire of a man. Since writing the above, the small perforated muzzle has been adopted, but the same attendance is still given

are also employed by the municipality to lay the dust, so soon as the summer sets in. They are made to pour forth their treasure after an original way. A long leather spout is fixed to the end of each cask, bound with a rope at the muzzle, to prevent the escape of the water. When the cart comes on the ground to be irrigated, an attendant loosens the rope sufficiently to permit a certain flow from the barrel, but still knotted firmly about the spout; he then escapes from the gush, running the whole length of the rope, twists it round his arm, and jerks the tube from side to side, in this ingenious manner producing a wide splashing current, and highly pleased if any *lechugino* comes within reach of his engine, to have the opportunity of baptizing him in due form.

The great extent of the *Prado* allows every

as before the improvement. Even this, the laying of the dust, is an operation entirely depending on the whim and caprice of the *corregidor* of the town. Any day that this functionary happens to be out of humour with himself, or with the inhabitants, he can countermand the irrigation, and bedust them with impunity.

body a choice, and a walk according to his humour. The space between the gate of Atocha and its convent is the favourite resort of the delicate or convalescent, being well protected from the ruder winds by the heights and wall of the Retiro. It is also the chosen haunt of *canonigos* (prebendaries), “snug men,” and other folks of easy habits and incomes, who like to take their time, walk slow, or stop at every sentence, without being hustled and elbowed by impertinent youngsters.

Here, too, old cronies give and receive the friendly pinch of snuff, and descant upon its flavour and pungency; while some, assuming a firmer tread, and grasping their cane with a forgotten vigour, talk with moistened eyelids of the “joys of their dancing days”—of those blessed times when no young girl could look with impunity on their well-turned leg, and the graceful tie of their pigtail. For *then*, thank God! all men of spirit wore short breeches and tails, and showed how nature had made them; not, as now, when the friendly trowser affords a refuge to flute or drumstick shanks and shins of many a vapour-

ing coxcomb. Others, again, more taciturn in their enjoyments, lean upon their gold-headed canes, silent admirers of the numerous band of ragged little brats amusing themselves rolling over one another from top to bottom of the steep declivity next the walls of the convent, exciting, doubtless, many a sigh that octogenarian members cannot do as much ! *

“ Country folks prefer the shady avenue bordering on the Botanic Garden,† charmed with the view and fragrance of this enclosure on one

* Besides these young vagabonds, who thus get an appetite without having the least idea where and when they can satisfy it, otherwise than by the dexterity of their fingers and the fleetness of their legs, the sunny side of the wall bounding the *Retiro*, is infested with a motley and loathsome collection of beggars, gipsies, and profligates of both sexes, who come here to bask all day long in the sun, patch their rags, and get rid of their vermin, until night affords them an opportunity of stealing the means of passing another idle morrow. This class is the most independent in the state. They only observe the laws as it suits their convenience, and are in nowise molested by our admirable police.

† See Chapter on the *Retiro*.

side, and the constant string of carriages and horsemen on the other,—novelties only to be seen in Madrid, and described and listened to with envy and delight on their return.” Drowsy citizens are to be found here, enjoying a comfortable *siesta*, rolled up in their cloaks, their persons carefully bestowed in the corners between the pillars and the railing, secure from the wheels of carriages and hoofs of horses; whether preferring the stone bench to their “*colchones*,” or being lulled by the breeze to the objurgations of their spouses, is difficult to be ascertained. Other groups repair to this retreat, intent on other pastimes, of which one may be especially noted as most prevalent, viz., a most assiduous and persevering examination of their own and children’s heads, not altogether for the same purpose, or in the same way as recommended by Gall or Spurzheim. Fat *amas de leche* (wet nurses), from the mountains of Santander,* with shewy handkerchiefs tied about

* The women from the green hills of Santander and its district, the *Pasiegas*, as they are called, have the enviable monopoly, or nearly so, of “child-suckling” throughout the

their heads, tight cloth jackets, and gorgeous laced petticoats, infest this place with their squalling charges; not to mention the juvenile gambols of a crowd of *ninos*, of little angels of both sexes, overlooked by their *bonnes*, who generally get some smart young fellow to help them in their charge.

But the saloon “of the Prado,” is the spot greater part of Spain. Parents are, no doubt, attracted by their stout forms, fine clear skins and rosy complexions. In these respects, they may call any Englishwoman “cousin.” The nurses from the mountains of Burgos have the privilege of suckling the princes and princesses of the royal family.” Their dress is very picturesque, exhibiting a mixture of the Turkish and Spanish costume; it consists of an embroidered close-fitting cloth jacket, and a very full cloth petticoat of red, yellow, or some other striking colour, bordered with from two to four rows of broad gold lace, according to the means of their employers. When in full dress, they wear their hair plaited in two tails behind, reaching far below the waist, and set off at the end by little knots of rose-coloured ribbon. A piece of vanity in which young mothers are fond of indulging, is to drive or walk out with their infant in the arms of a handsome richly-dressed *pasiega*; they are just as proud of it, as an honest Turk is of having a fine young lad to carry his pipe after him.

where the fame of this renowned field for amorous intrigue and adventure is exclusively kept up. The young, the elegant, and the mass of the population, assemble here at fixed and different hours. Though much frequented at all seasons of the year, it never presents so brilliant a spectacle as in the fine afternoon of a day in spring, when the deep blue sky of Madrid displays its cloudless vault and surpassing beauty.* On such a day, when the flood of population is rolling downwards to-

* Though the climate of Madrid has altogether degenerated from what our forefathers tell us of its excellence, there are still days in winter which might do honour to Naples or Corinth ; neither of these possesses a more cloudless sky, or one of deeper blue. At this season, the Prado is the rendezvous of two distinct classes of visitors. The middling orders and industrious part of the population take their walk from twelve till half-past one, when the *garbonzas* invite them home. They are relieved by the *beau monde*, with their horses and equipages, until four o'clock, when the noontide loungers again come down with renewed forces and full stomachs, and ramble up to the "Retiro" to stare at the ducks and geese on the great pond, and the wild beasts in their cages.

wards the Prado, following the narrow flagways in two dark lines, and a portion dispersed over the wide street of Alcalà, the spectacle presented by the infinite variety of colours and costumes, the buzz of so great a crowd, and a bright and glorious sun gilding every object, is of the most striking and animated kind. This imposing mass of life flows on and increases in volume, until it finally disburthens itself into the ample “saloon,” as rivers discharge their waters into the bosom of the wide ocean.

Now begins an agreeable confusion, a friendly elbowing, a volley of “Señora! at your feet;” “I kiss your hand, Caballero!” ogling of eyes and manœuvring of fans, an everchanging succession of faces, and an incessant exchange of laudatory or splenetic remarks on each other.”*

* *Ojos Arabes* (Arabian eyes) are looked upon with great affection by Spaniards, that is, when they are large and full, combined with the softness of the gazelle. Those in the almond shape, more oblong than round, are highly prized by their owners, with good reason. I suspect that the ‘Moors’ have had more to do with our “Tatarabuelas” (our great great great grandmothers) than their decorum and

The rumble of carriages, the galloping of horses, an atmosphere loaded with white thin dust, the barking and barking of well-washed, shorn and whiskered poodles, the shrill cry of the *aquador*—“Berro, Berro,* cold as snow, Christian bearing, or our genealogies, should have permitted. A pair of Arab eyes inveighs us into matrimony, while as Moorish and as moulded a *cura* (curate) as ever saluted the stone of Mecca, performs the ceremony. We are, at best, but baptized or whitewashed Moors: fair hair and blue eyes have the merit of contrast with our dark skinned sons and daughters. A fine blonde girl may always count upon a strong cabal in her favour, and stake her blue eye against the field,—a great encouragement to the British fair to travel this way.

* The fountain *del Berro* (of the cresses), famed for its pure crystal water, lies about a mile outside the Alcalà gate, a little before you arrive at the *Quintà del Espiritu Santo*, to the right hand. There is nothing remarkable about it, beyond its being the spring whence the royal family is supplied. A whitewashed shed is built over the source, two spouts pouring forth its contents; the supply is abundant, and open to all who take the trouble to send for it. The *aquadores* of the “Prado” and the streets of Madrid indulge in a poetic licence, giving the name for the thing. They sell each glass of water, *soi-disant* berro, an ochavo, half a cuarto (about half a farthing English). People may

another little glass, who will drink it? Water! Water!"—the little ragamuffin's plaintive, "Candela! Caballero, quien la quiere?" and the whisking of his burning ropes-end in fiery circles—the low rushing sound of many feet and voices, are all so many proofs of the Prado being in its pride and strength!

Acquaintances meet and stop in little groups to chat about the ball or *tertulia* of the night before. The ladies kiss one another's cheeks in the most affectionate manner. "Adios! Juanita! How do you do? Have you slept after the ball? Jesus! I could not waltz at all with that horrid *pesado*, who persecuted me the whole night." "Abour! Joaquina! you already know that I love you!" "Tell me, Juanita, did you ever see such a bonnet as she wears. There she sails along, so proud of it! It does not at all become her. If she thinks she looks like a *Francesca*, I can tell her she is very much mistaken."—"Paquita! for God's sake, drink it at this rate and be thankful, even though it should come from the Calle de las Infantas, supposed to be the worst water in Madrid.

look at that fat *dolores*, strutting about in a *basquina*. Vamos! Some people are either blind or mad. She has no shape at all, the same every where. Ave Maria! look, look at her foot, go to. I would rather take the air outside the gate of Toledo all my life, than shew such a piece of furniture, for all the world like a *butifarrà** from Mallorca. But my aunt is bellowing to me ; good bye. Pichoncita (little pigeon), adieu!" This charitable flower knot is again mingled with the mass.

A *frulling* sound, like the chattering of birds in a cage, reigns in every direction, produced by the tremulous shake, and sudden opening and shutting, of innumerable fans of all colours and

* A good legitimate *butifarrà* from Mallorca, (however humiliating the companion of a *Luchugina*'s foot to it may be considered,) is worthy of the greatest consideration as an eatable, and standard ingredient of an orthodox " *puchero*." It has some relationship with the English black hog's pudding, but is six times the size, composed of that unclean animal's blood, and seasoned with sundry dainty ingredients. A thorough-bred son of the Balearic islands will make nothing of devouring a large trencher of it, as a whet before commencing more serious operations.

sizes, so many eloquent tongues speaking an intelligible language to conscious observers. Even as flowers are the “language of love” in the East, there is nothing in the soft science which may not be explained by a Spanish lady with her fan. Jealousy may pry and peer in vain, under the very nose of the greatest Bluebeard of a husband; questions are asked and answers given, full and explicit, which he cannot intercept.*

* When Addison imagined his “fan exercise” for ladies, he must have had an idea of the alarming perfection to which this light arm is carried in Spain. It is the inseparable companion of the little girl from three years of age to fourteen, when, from a handy plaything, she turns it into a formidable offensive and defensive weapon, giving a trembling swain an exstatic “yes!” or crushing a presuming suitor with an irrevocable “no!” It would be endless, as well as impossible, to attempt to describe the intermediate degrees of hope and fear, despair or passion, expressed by the spreading and furling of its painted wings. Deprive a Spanish woman of her fan and white handkerchief (whether a flag of truce or emblem of innocence in her hand), and she loses her self-possession, and half her fascination. She is, if young, a fairy without her wand; if old, a witch without her broomstick.

Here, too, is the rendezvous of unhappy lovers, of such as are considered too dangerous, or of dubious funds and intentions, or of mar-alls in the way of a match, already determined upon by long-headed parents, and who are consequently denied the privilege of visiting at the houses of the ladies, at least, until the marriage ceremony be over. Here she searches, with eyes swoln with weeping, her chosen *nobio*. Here they can steal a long look at each other, from under the fan or behind the folds of the *capa*, despite the watchful attendance of the family. But should such illicit glances be discovered, the poor girl may bid a long farewell to the pleasures of the Prado, and even to the balcony of her chamber, should it look upon the street.*

Hundreds of light supple forms keep up their

* If Spain be the country in the world where matrimony meets with least obstacles, in it also may be found cases where the friends and parents of the young lady are quite as obliging and wordly-wise as they are in other countries. I might mention many instances in corroboration of the observation in the text.

graceful elastic step for two and three hours together, regardless alike of the dust and heat, and shoes a great deal too light, even for their diminutive feet—proving that vanity suffers no pain. *Que pie tan mono!* *Que chiquitito!* (what a lovely foot! what a little bit of a thing!) whispered by a cavalier as he passes, more than repays their cramps and agony. A gentle flutter of the fan, an eye rolled languidly his way, is the “guerdon” of so much good taste.

In the meanwhile, other sights and other scenes are passing on the carriage drive;—an uninterrupted file of vehicles of all descriptions, of coaches, britskas, phaëtons, cabriolets, gigs, and horsemen, moving at a processional pace in two lines up and down the whole length of the Prado. The curious, in such matters, might trace the infancy and progress of carriage-building in the various and astounding models rolling before his eyes. The old Spanish berlina, broad and high of roof, tapering towards the bottom, swinging between four enormous leather springs running under the body of the carriage, drawn

by a solemn well-fed pair of *machos* (mules), with close-shaved backs, tails, and ears, covered with antique trappings, among which the saddle, almost level with the animal's back behind, while the front rises boldly into a peak, higher at least by half a foot than the seat, is particularly worthy of notice ; a rusty stirrup-iron makes its appearance from beneath a heavy skirt, just large enough to admit the toe of the postilion, who, placed on this lofty eminence, guides his mules, some with bells, some without. This poor man, in his glazed cocked hat and iron-bound gaiters, obliged to follow implicitly the movements of his cattle, is pitched fore and aft, in so strange a fashion, that, were it not for the proud cock of his toe in the stirrup, and his well-stretched knee, one would imagine he was an *alma en pena* (a soul in purgatory).

Then comes the *coche decollera*,* rather more

* This description of carriage, formerly the only one used by grandees and the rich nobility, and requiring a team of mules too numerous and expensive for more limited fortunes, is now in the hands of the *calesseros* (coach proprietors), who let carriages, or keep a stand in the streets of Madrid.

modern in its cut, but on the same system of springs ; a low seat before the driver and *zagal*, with a team of seven mules, tackled together by a most intricate combination of long slender ropes running from the pole to the leaders, and looking, for all the world, as if they were running away from the carriage, instead of with it.

These “turn-outs” are usually occupied by the families of snug *abogados*, roguish *escribanos*, or *agentes de negocios*; of clerks in the different public offices; and, now and then, by some proud unbending *hidalgo* and his spouse, fresh from their province, who insist upon having things as they were, and, in their mind, ought to be; to the horror of the *muchachas*, who are almost ashamed to peep out of the antiquated loop-holes

They are well hung, though on rude and most antiquated principles, and commodious enough inside. The number of mules is seldom less than seven, which are harnessed in pairs, with the seventh as a leader. The arrangement of the pole, and the infinity of slender ropes diverging from this centre to the furthermost animal, is a matter quite beyond ordinary comprehension. The space occupied by seven mules thus tackled, measures, at least, fifty feet in length.

of such a vehicle. The *muchachos*, the sons, who prefer walking, endeavour to palliate the evil as much as possible, by being the first to quiz the family set-out with their companions.

Excepting some picturesque *bombes* and *calecins*, whose masters have nerve enough to parade abroad, the more modern equipages differ but little from those of other Continental capitals,* unless, when an absent coachman forgets his cravat, or shows too much of his linen. The inmates of these fashionable equipages affect an easy loll as they pass in review the female pedestrians, criticizing their dress and appearance ; a species of compliment which the latter fail not to repay with usury. We may here remark, that fashion has latterly triumphed so much over taste, as to substitute, for the graceful mysterious

* Very few carriages are built in Madrid for the fashionables. Besides the backwardness of this art in Spain, the prices are so high, that a French or German (query English ?) carriage, including the duty, is cheaper, although infinitely better finished. Spaniards are now beginning, however, to construct their own diligences, mails, &c. and have improved considerably of late years.

mantilla, the staring French hat, with flowers and feathers. A very few years back, no lady, however high in station, would have hazarded appearing in public with a bonnet; for the spirit of novelty was then checked by national feelings and sympathies. But the laudable preference for this noble and beautiful costume is every day on the wane; a short time will see the *mantilla* banished to the smaller and more remote towns of the Peninsula.*

The space between the two strings of carriages is filled by equestrians of all classes—civilians, military men, grandes, tricked out as *Majos*,† a few *Lechuginas*, mounted *à la Inglesa*—each adopting the pace prudence, or

* All admirers of the simple and beautiful Spanish costume must observe, with regret, the decided preference given to the French fashions now-a-days. This vitiated taste is even gaining ground with the lower orders of society.

† Of late years, it is the fashion for young noblemen of the highest rank to parade the streets of Madrid on foot or horseback, tricked out in all the pageantry of the gay Andalusia. Would that they were as patriotic as their models in sundry more serious and indispensable points!

carelessness of his neck, may suggest; others amuse themselves in conveying to and receiving telegraphic signals from some tender-hearted beauty on the promenade. But none are so distinguished in "kicking up a dust," and haunting the "ride," as two young dukes, to the admiration of all young girls desirous of securing two such goodly prizes.

The same scene continues until lassitude, the approach of night, the theatre, and *tertulias*, warn the promenaders that it is time to leave the Prado for another day.

The Madrilians talk with rapture of the pleasures of the Prado, during the fine evenings of summer; but the air is then so sultry, and so impregnated with an impalpable white dust, one of the scourges of Madrid, that, so far from yielding any enjoyment, a walk in the Prado becomes an absolute infliction. During the hottest season, the hour of rendezvous is not earlier than seven o'clock in the evening. The only way of being aristocratic and extravagant, and distinguished from the modest crowd, is, by laying out a few cuartos (at the rate of two for each) for four or five rush-

bottomed chairs, out of the hundred marshalled for public accommodation, in treble rows along the wall, and bestowing your person upon them. Persons of economical habit (the large majority) prefer taking their seats for nothing, on the stone seats ranged at regular intervals on both sides of the saloon. This season may well be called the harvest of the *Aguadores*, who ply their calling among the crowd in opposition to the ambulating establishments set up beneath the trees at the entrance of the Prado, where rows of little white classical-shaped vases of white porous earth,* and

* This earthen vessel, commonly called *Botico*, has the peculiar and, in a warm country, inestimable quality of preserving water or any liquid contained in it perfectly cool. It owes this advantage to its porous properties. The right sort are distinguished from the counterfeits by the interior partaking of a light greenish hue. The manufacture of these forms a considerable branch of the commerce of Andujar, a small town in Andalusia, but too celebrated for the decree of the Duc d'Angoulême, and its violation, almost at the same time, during the French invasion of twenty-three. At nightfall these water stands are illuminated, shewing to advantage the rows of glasses and heaps of *ascuvillos* (sugar sponge); chairs and benches are set near them, for the ac-

lines of tumblers filled with sparkling water, invite the passengers to slake their thirst with the same pure liquid, while his majesty drinks water from the fountain of Berro. The quantity of water consumed by a Spanish crowd is incredible; except, perhaps, some stubborn Arragonese, the lowest classes even, prefer it to wine in warm weather. During the French occupation, *cafés* and *restaurants* were established in the Tivoli gardens, but they pined away on the departure of their mercurial customers, and have long since been shut up. When a *caballero* now wishes to offer an *obsequio* or *finezza* to ladies of his pre-dilection, he is obliged to send to the *café* Santa Catalina, or de Solis, for ices and lemonade, *con sus correspondientes biscochos*, with its accompanying cakes. This piece of extravagance, however, is but seldom committed. Few young aspirants for female applause but have had to repent

commodation of thirty loungers. These establishments, with their lamps and painted sign boards, pourtraying fresh and abundant fountains, have a very peculiar and picturesque appearance.

their rashness in asking ladies to step into Solis, and *refrescar** on their way home.

When the bustle of the crowd is past, or reduced to a fitful whispering sound, in those more silent hours when the moon looks abroad, and the air partakes of her fresh and calming influence, a summer night in the Prado is not without its charms. The hum of the city is heard—but at intervals and afar off, like the

* It is a serious undertaking to invite a few female friends to repose, and slake their thirst, after a summer evening's stroll in the Prado. They are so pleasant, and chatty, and thirsty; and then one must fiddle, with something in the shape of solids, cakes, biscuits, or what not. I have known military Lotharios of my acquaintance leave the half of their month's pay in the gripe of the waiters, for the pleasure of one snug evening. Still it must be said, that the ladies of Madrid are, by no means, to be compared in *franqueza* (off-handedness) to their sisters of Malaga, not one of whom has any objection, or would make the least difficulty, in dispatching dozen upon dozen of the little round plump inviting Malaga figs, not to mention ices, *yemas* (yolk of eggs conserved,) and other pastimes. An ounce, (three pounds five shillings) is a mere trifle to put in one's pocket when gallantly inclined.

breathing of the sea upon the shore. The birds of night send down a solemn greeting from the dismantled walls of the palace of the Retiro, as a voice from the depths of the past, telling of ruin, and desolation, and human vicissitude. The busy animated "crush" of an hour ago becomes a vast solitude, animated only by the shrill voice of the *cigalas* keeping vigil in the trees, and lulled by the dash of the fountains. Perchance, some fond couple, or solitary being come there to commune with himself, are seen gliding along the moonlit alleys, taking counsel from the night.

CHAPTER XII.

Theatres.

MADRID cannot boast of its theatres. The amateurs of the gentle pastime of bull-fighting are infinitely better accommodated in their pleasures than the lovers of the drama. Though better conducted now-a-days than formerly, the theatres must still be considered as vastly inferior to the same establishments of any other European capital, both in their *local* appearance, and in the mediocrity of the performers attached to them.

The old chroniclers of Madrid* boast of its theatres from the epoch of the Court first residing here. The renowned poet and comedian, Lope de Rueda, probably flourished about this period; he who, according to the worthy master Antonio Perer, was the witchery of the court of Philip II., and possessed the marvellous secret of unwrinkling the brow and expanding the heart of that gloomy and cruel despot. Cervantes also immortalizes Don Lope, stating having seen him play when a boy.

The church, or rather her ministers, even in the height of their pious indignation against the wanderings of the flesh, have always judged it right and prudent to attend to temporal advantages, holding forth one hand to receive the donations of sinners, while the other is brandishing the spiritual thunders against them.

* The *Engouement* of the ancient historians of Madrid for its perfections, luxuries, and prosperity, surpasses even eastern hyperbole. Some of them have their misgivings whether this favoured spot was not the one first chosen for the residence of man. Quotations of this nature would be too tedious for insertion.

In pursuance of this solid system, we find, that “the congregation of the holy passion” was the first to seek and obtain a privilege enabling its members to turn to account so profane a vocation as play-acting, by letting a sort of barn to the comedians. This was discovered to be so good a thing, as to excite the envy of the brotherhood of “our lady of solitude,” who solicited the same privilege of providing the children of Thespis with lodgings. Their pretensions gave rise to a long and well wrangled lawsuit, which ended where it ought to have begun—in the contending parties agreeing to divide the profits. An Italian, of the name of Ganasa, as yet unknown to fame, was the first who had the honour to rent a *coral* (or cattle pen) for the Madrid public; being bound, moreover, by his contract, to put a roof on the coral—a desideratum hitherto overlooked. The frequenters of the pit, however, long continued to enjoy the advantage of a blue sky, and free circulation of air over their heads; that part of the house remaining in its pristine state of simplicity, with the exception of an awning drawn

over it in hot weather, to protect the spectators' heads from the action of the sun. All representations were, in those sober times, given during the day. Things were carried on, in this way, until the brotherhoods took the matter to heart, and built two theatres, one in the Calle de la Cruz, the other in that of the Principe, where they both maintain their ground to this day.

The taste for dramatic recreation increased with the facilities of gratifying it thus offered, swelling the receipts so considerably, as to attract the attention of the hospitals and other charitable institutions, the funds of which were ultimately augmented by pensions levied on the products of the theatres. The corporation of Madrid, thinking to make a good speculation, undertook them on its own account, indemnifying the hospitals and parties interested. Since that time, comedy has run the gauntlet, leading a sort of ephemeral existence, now suppressed, and now revived.

During the reigns of Philip IV. and Ferdinand VI., the buskin was again held in honour, the first-mentioned monarch devoting himself with

ardour to the drama, and not content with enjoying the productions of Lope de Vega, Calderon, Tirso de Molina, Moreto, Solis, Rojas, and other innumerable sparks around the royal blaze, descending, now and then, "as a profound secret," to try the yawning muscles of his subjects with some of his own trifles, got up in the best manner, at his own splendid theatre of the *Buen Retiro*.*

* The extravagance of Philip IV. in the indulgence of his dramatic inclination is, perhaps, the only memorable circumstance of his reign. The entertainments given in 1637, in commemoration of the election of Ferdinand, king of Hungary, nephew to the emperor, and Philip's brother-in-law, cost twelve millions of reals (one hundred and twenty thousand pounds). Plays, feasts, and bull-fights, succeeded one another during forty-two days. In a moment of caprice, his majesty ordered a stage to be fitted up, on rafts and boats, in the middle of the large lake of the Retiro, with its decorations, scenery, lights, and tents, to receive the company on St. John's night. The Saint, justly scandalised at all this feasting, eating and drinking and play-going, sent a capful of wind from a nook in the Guadarama mountains, which did its office so effectually as to upset the whole concern, leaving actors and audience to scramble out as well as they could.—(Maestro Perez—*Antiq. de Madrid.*)

Ferdinand IV. had a better ear for Italian music than for Spanish declamation. His example extinguished entirely the taste for "comedy," which had been gradually declining since the death of Philip IV. The Spanish muse sought refuge with Molière, and in the shadow of the throne of the "Grande Monarque." The melancholy reign of Charles II., and the vicissitudes following in the train of the war of succession, were but ill adapted to recall the fugitive.

The Italian Opera, fostered by a royal dilettante, reached its *apogee* in Spain. Splendid dresses, decorations, and scenery ; nothing seems to have been wanting to second the exertions of the first artists of those times. The local advantages of the theatre in the "Retiro," were undoubtedly great. Placed in the midst of extensive gardens, which served as scenery, according as the piece required, and allowed the introduction and manœuvres of a troop of horse, the fascinations of the scene ceased to be illusion. About this period, the eyes of sober *hidalgos* began first to rejoice in the flitting, brilliant, and tantalizing movements of opera

dancers, to follow with intense interest, and ever and anon a watering mouth, the evolutions of a nimble pair of legs belonging to a comely person ; —comedy, a chaste and well-clad maiden, with petticoats of decorous length, and no *entrechat* or caper in her whole existence, could not stand, was unable to cope with such agile and half-naked rivals. She was highly commended by every body, as a most proper and well-behaved lady, but abandoned, altogether, by vicious, fickle, and ungrateful man.

In the meanwhile, let it not be thought that the old houses lacked company ; there were crowded audiences every day, who came there, however, not with the intent of hearing and seeing, but of fighting. These two theatres became the field of battle of the blades and ruffians of the town. To decide the merits of their respective favourites, a stout *garote*, or leaded cudgel, was much oftener called in requisition than the best opera-glass. The pieces were of so low and ribald a description, as to be beneath contempt. People went to the theatre not for the play, but to have a bout, just as modern

Englishmen did during the memorable O. P. row, or an Irishman when he goes to a fair. Moratin, though a plagiarist, did all he could to mend matters and reform abuses, by his *comedia nueva*, which, as usual in such cases, was of no service, until government and the police took the matter into their own hands, and gradually restored something like order. The apparition of two great stage luminaries, *La Rita Luna*, and Isidor Marquez, was, however, the real cause of the revival and amelioration of public taste. They raised Spanish tragedy to a height from which she has since sadly fallen. In this, as in every other country, every day holds out her hopes for the restoration of the right of the legitimate drama.

The present theatre of La Cruz, was built during the last century; it was an abortion of the architect Ribera, the buffoon of his art. Its external appearance and interior arrangement, are the worst possible. The site is equally bad, being stuffed into a little corner, only approachable through a succession of dark narrow streets. The least accident befalling a carriage, obstructs all farther passage. It is chiefly destined to

the performance of the “regular comedy” and comic operas; tragedies and serious operas being reserved for the more spacious boards of the “Principe.” This theatre may contain about one thousand three hundred persons; a full house produces, as nearly as possible, 10,000 reals, (100*l.*) Places in the lower tier of boxes cost each 64 reals (14*s.*) First row, 60 reals, (12*s.*) Second, 48 (10*s.*) The *lunetas* (seats in the pit, in the guise of a comfortless arm-chair), cost 12 reals (2*s. 6d.*) The *casuela* for females, from 8 to 4 reals (3*d.*, 4*d.* to 10*d.*) Men’s seats also diminish from 12 reals to 4 (2*d.*, 6*d.* to 10*d.*), according to their commodious arrangement.

The theatre “del Principe,” was re-edified at the beginning of the present century. It is of superior architecture to the Cruz, and has been made as much of as its limited space would allow. The interior distribution is good. The prices of admission are the same as in the sister house; and must be regarded as exorbitant, if the amount of diversion be compared with the money laid out. The heavy contributions levied on theatrical receipts for the

benefit of the hospitals, and the *monte pio*,* or widow's fund, whence the widows of actors draw their pensions, added to the sums paid to *inbilados* (superannuated actors), sufficiently account for the great difference between the prices here, and those of Barcelona and Valencia, where the theatres are far superior to those of the capital, in all points. Barcelona can boast of an Italian opera and company, worthy of ranking with those of either Paris or London; and is one of the very few secondary towns in Europe in possession of this elegant source of amusement, excepting, of course, Valencia, which already begins to vie with her maritime sister in this respect, with the advantage of a more modern and spacious theatre.†

* Every public career in Spain has its *monte pio*, or sacred widow's fund. An excellent institution, and well worthy of imitation in countries that pride themselves on a far higher degree of civilization.

† There can be no stronger proof of the passion of the Spaniards for music, than the fact of two of their provincial towns supporting the heavy expense of an Italian

A person who should come to Madrid, labouring under a fit of that cruel malady commonly known by the name of “blue devils,” must not look to a visit to the theatres (the usual *panacea* in such cases) as a certain or speedy cure for his ailment. In the first place, the scene is not lit up with gas, but owes its illumination to the exertions of a large lustre, swinging in mid-air, and an unruly lamp, which is every now and then going wrong, commencing by looking very gloomy, blinking itself by degrees, and, at last, going out in a solid powerful stench. To the lustre, however, an *Argus* is attached, a mysterious being, revolving round its orbit, or rather about the circular space left for its admission in the ceiling above. He pops his head out of the hole whenever the *puahs* of the audience become alarming, sets his pulleys to work, and manœuvres so as to correct all mistakes, indifferent to the sufferings of the heroes of

opera. The establishment of the Italian company in Valencia, however, only dates from the year 1832.

the stage, and the nervous sensitiveness of the audience, seated under the oscillations of so mighty an ornament, suspended by a cord, not always faithful to its trust.

Besides the powerful assistance thus afforded to the illusions of the scene, the peculiarly sombre, not to say melancholy, aspect of the theatre itself, contributes to chasten the mind, and remove all superfluous hilarity from the most mercurial temperament.

The boxes exhibit a praiseworthy contempt of meretricious ornament, such as gilding, emblematical trophies, masks, cupids, daggers, pandean pipes, lutes, lyres, and flageolets, so ingeniously grouped and affixed to the panels of other theatres, affording a gentle pastime to the curious between the acts, to devise their purport, and admire the flickering of the lights on their gorgeous gilding. An uniform white colour predominates, unbroken by any great display of hat or feathers, or Cashmere shawls, to enrich its nakedness. Excepting the red damask drapery of the royal box, and that of the most excellent *ayuntamiento* (corpora-

tion) of this very loyal and heroic city, the *coup d'œil* puts one in mind of the absent man, who presented himself to his friends unincumbered with the usual trappings of mortality. There are, to be sure, two or three boxes which show a narrow stripe of various coloured silk, just barely covering the cornice, like a bib or pinafore grown too short for the wearer.

In revenge, they are peopled with black, well-fringed, amorous eyes, from the round and full and shining, to the languishing almond-shaped, more oval than circular (*ojos almendrados*, as they are called), which must be seen to be properly understood.

The *mantilla*, so noble and becoming on most occasions, does not lend its usual fascination to the boxes of a theatre. Its simplicity and uniform colour, (white or black,) the great merit elsewhere, saddens the sight here. Were it not for the quick flutter of party-coloured fans, a few flowers stuck in the hair of some fair ones, and the occasional stretching of swan-necks out of the boxes, the chat and

titter, the fair assemblage might not unaptly be mistaken for a choir of nuns at vespers, rather than an assemblage of worldly women at a play. The small minority of bonnets and feathers and artificial flowers, exerts itself with great disinterestedness to fill up this absence of variety. Its members look and bow, and shake their fans at each other from their different ports. These pride themselves on being the arbiters of “ton” and manners. The diplomatic physiognomies generally to be detected among the audience, are not always calculated to relieve the general monotony; though it must be said, that what with the help of *lorgnons* suited to one eye or both, the frequent circulation of the snuff-box, and an occasional mysterious communication made to the ear of a colleague, this distinguished corps fills its *papel* (paper) very creditably to itself.

Notwithstanding the French toilettes, and the diplomatic elegant extracts, the interior of the Madrid theatres has always surprised me more with the feelings incident to entering a *chapelle ardente*, or illuminated cenotaph, than anything

less connected with *memento mori*. The dark mass of mantillas filling up the *casuela* or *gallinero*, (hencoop)* throwing up in strong relief the brown or pale faces of the wearers, does really give the idea of a crowd of mourners waiting the arrival of the *cortege*.

The *hencoop*, so irreverently nicknamed, is, however, by no means so sad a place as it looks. It is a congregation of every gradation of the set from eighty to eighteen, fond of music and looking at their neighbours, and who are persuaded (whether for economy or taste, it is not for me to say,) that the notes fall more softly on the ear when heard at a greater distance from the orchestra; the eye, however, plunges with greater facility on the crowd of the opposite sex

* The noise kept up by the fair tenants of the “gallinero,” certainly does not altogether differ from the conversation of a number of the domestic birds alluded to in the text. I have heard many ladies complain themselves of the “pico’s tongues,” so nimbly hung, of their companions in the cage. The “hush” from the pit is answered by an indignant and universal “frule” of fans from the “hencoop;” as the position is commanding and ably defended, they go on talking as they please.

seated in the pit.* Notwithstanding the sage precaution which separates the male from the softer sex, lodging them in different parts of the house, the theatre, including the beleaguered “hencoop,” is regarded, and not without reason, as a favourite field for soft intrigue. There is a luxury of protection afforded to the timid occupants of the *casuela*, in the shape of a sentinel with firelock and fixed bayonet without, and a “Cerberus” within the precincts, with both of which their wards could most readily dispense.

An old hag, disguised with the title of key-keeper, opposes the last barrier to intrusion, and scares any thing with a hat on far from this asylum of beauty and innocence. This personage has also her particular friends and old

* Many ladies of high degree make use of the *casuela* as a sort of loophole, whence they may see without being seen, and observe the motions of the *querido*. While the “señora’s” box is empty at the theatre, and she herself is supposed to be writing or unwell, how often will she be found planted in the “hencoop,” wrapped in her black mantilla, and meditating condign punishment for the faithless *cortigo*, whom she has detected coqueting with some rival acquaintance.

cronies and favourites, like other public characters. When the groups begin to arrive, some at an early hour to secure good places, they never part without kissing the old lady on both cheeks, and serve her up a dish of chat; after which, they go and fight themselves into their places. When the “crush” comes, this is no trifling undertaking; besides physical strength and presence of mind, it requires a military *coup d'œil*, which seldom fails them.

“Excuse me, madam, but you are plump in my place.” “Holy Mary! you are quite mistaken, indeed you are. Here is my number, can you read?” “Oh! that is all a trick, pray get up,” “I shan’t move.” “*Llavera!*” (*the old key-keeper*). “Raise your voice, madam, the poor woman is a little deaf since the wind changed.” The rival faces have fired each other reciprocally during the contest with strong movements of indignation. “Vaya! go to! any body and every body.” “Yo! me! I should be glad to look at your *ejecutoria* (pedigree). The daughter of an *intendente* is not to be lightly treated, *Llavera!*” “Buenas noches Carmen.” “I wish

you the same, Doña Bernarda." "Ha ha! This is your seat no doubt, you are not wrong, but could you not make a little more room, at least, I can't sit here." "Amiga, if you grow fat, it is not my fault." "Jesus! what a temper you have got."—"At your service, such as it is. Boy, do not thrust your elbows into my ribs." "Llavera! a glass of water, and God will repay it to you!" "Away with the water! it has wet all my mantilla, and soaked my fan. I shan't hand it forward." "Pretty manners!" growls the thirsty old lady. "If you are dry, go to the fountain!" "Virgen Santissima! Who is this woman walking over me! (the benches are in amphitheatre). Senora! pray mind what you are doing, you have put your foot through my skirt; let me tell you, with your leave, it is not meant to clean shoes. It was new the feast of St. Isidro." "I never had an eye in my foot yet, madam." "Well said, shameless!" "Such words to me?"

Things, at last, settle into comparative quiet. The tenants of the "hencoop" set themselves seriously to their different occupations of ob-

serving, listening, or sleeping, for some elderly ladies, who, from long habit, cannot stay at home, repair thither to see out their nap of an evening. The majority are more actively employed. Advantageously placed, as we observed, to discover all that is passing in the pit below, they turn this circumstance to full account. Unrecognised herself individually, by all but one pair of eyes below, the *querida* feasts upon the curly head, pert airs, and starched shirt collar of her ‘*adorado*’ in the pit. This dear object has a jealous watchful sentinel upon all his actions. She knows who are, or ought to be, in the various boxes; those whom he visits, if his looks take an improper direction, or remain too long in any, not centering in herself. He may perchance enjoy for a moment the pain such aberrations give, but he may rest assured of his repenting such coquetry, if a vivid imagination fed by jealousy, a flippant tongue, and a woman’s *savoir faire* are to be dreaded on such occasions.

The *cousigne* of the guardians of so many savoury morsels, is not altogether so inviolate

as it ought to be. The ban is broken through under various pretexts. It is really quite touching to see the number of dutiful sons coming to look after their mammas; brothers enquiring for their sisters—true patterns of domestic affection. Then the *alojados* (lodgers), who have been locked out, and want to see and speak with their *patronas* (landladies), merely to get the key to let themselves in. Such reasonable requests can hardly be denied. Hence arises a conversation, a little prolix and confused, as is natural among such a crowd of Doñas, Pepas, Antonias, Teresas, Tomasas, Nicolosas, Felipas, &c., &c., so that before the right one (she with the cap, black or white, and the handkerchief tied carefully under her jaws) is made out, time has been given for a rendezvous, or the furtive slipping of a *billet doux* into a handkerchief, dropped designedly, or a “reticule” politely restored to its owner.

I recollect once finding myself in the predicament above mentioned, of being locked out of my lodgings by my *patrona*, at that time, Doña Teresa, a lady of a somewhat hasty tem-

perament, who had a son on the “boards,” and was a thorough play-goer herself, from enjoying this relaxation *gratis*, through her son’s privilege. It was a cold night, in the month of February, when snow is seen in the streets of Madrid oftener than becomes a southern capital, and the wind from the Guadarama gives various tokens of having come the shortest road from its icy covering. Although the *brazero* is but a sorry resource against such an evening, I was hastening home to mine, ran up the staircase in a trice, and arrived in full time to ascertain that the door was well barred and bolted. Don Tomas, the *amo*, out at his *tertulia*, while his spouse, Doña Teresa, was indubitably in a giggle at the racy sayings—*quid pro quos*, of some old Spanish comedy, or dissolved in tears at the *picardias* (villainies), practised against helpless innocence through the medium of a French melo-drame. A man in my excluded position finds generally half-a-dozen *pis-alls* come into his noddle at the same moment. While I stood shivering on the landing place, such did not fail to occur to me. Go back

from whence I came ? Besides being at a considerable distance, they were stupid people. Somewhere else ? True ; but having gone out in my *capa*, I wore a short jacket under it as is the custom,* (something like the leather doublet our forefathers wore under their armour), and you should know, gentle reader, if you do not already, that *la capa todo lo tapa*, or in the doggrel, which, after cudgelling my brains, I have hammered out as something like its equivalent :

The friendly cloak when on 'tis put,
I' faith's a famous cover-slut.

Wherefore the jacket is held in great estimation on such occasions, from its lightness and saving a better garment, and other prudent and discreet considerations. Still, you cannot present yourself in this garb in a regular *tertulia*, where ladies, young and old, congregate, dressed in their best, to outshow each other, and to dazzle the men, without some friendly voice reminding you

* The short jacket is universally a substitute for the coat, whenever the weather renders the cloak necessary.

of your *bevue*, by such questions as—"Do me the favour, how could you show yourself without skirts to your coat?" The *tertulia*, therefore, was not to be thought of. Take refuge in a *café*?—they are comfortless, and the atmosphere of smoke has ever been my abomination.—A library, news-room?—*now* they are but wretched affairs—*then* they were not. Go a "larking?" The fate of the gallant and insinuating Mr. Lobski was too present to my mind. No; in short, there was nothing for it but to discover in which of the theatres Doña Teresa was enjoying herself. A goodly research, truly, as she had the entrée of both; off I went, however, but, to confess the truth, with infinitely less animation or certainty of success in the object of my search, than him of the golden fleece, or the discoverer of the new world, when they set out on their several expeditions.

I went first to La Cruz, as the nearest, and there my inquiries produced considerable confusion and annoyance among the inhabitants of the *Casuela*. I remarked particularly, two or three young heads turned round, and seeing, I

suppose, that I was not “the man,” commenced a most vigorous cabal against intruders, in a style not very flattering. If my ears did not deceive me, I overheard—“Que, Doña Teresa, ni que narices ? (What, Doña Teresa ? or, what noses) ! all fudge ! He is only an *alcaguete* !” The old Jezabel of a key-keeper also soothed vanity in her own way. Even the sentinel, though usually a listless sort of personage, and lenient to a frolic, rather looked as if he were considering the expediency of handing me over to his corporal for the remainder of the evening.

Thus encouraged in my first attempt, I proceeded to the Principe, bestowing, as I went along, sundry hearty benedictions on the short memory and violent love of out-of-door diversions of my worthy patrona. This time, however, warned by my previous experience, I went much more cautiously about the business. Addressing myself first of all to the sentry, (whom I took care to call “Caballero”), I requested him to have the very great condescension to call out the male Cerberus. This done, I spoke to the

latter in a tone as persuasive as possible, explained my isolated position, pointing at the same time to various flakes of snow, which still shone bright and sparkling on my cloak ; all of which had its effect. “ You are right,” he said, “ but how is this woman to be found ? The *Casuela* is as full as a *Calabaza* ; they are packed in *como sardinas en un baril* (like sprats in a barrel). Besides, God knows how many “Teresas” there may be under all those “*gorras*,” and *mantillas*, and shawls. However, the first act is nearly over. The moment the curtain drops, we shall see.” This event was soon announced by the burst of voices in the *Casuela*, every one anxious to make up for the temporary restraint on their loquacity. Doña Mariana, the key-keeper, came forward, peered at me well through her spectacles, shut the novel she was reading, and said, “ Just put your nose inside the door, Caballero ! perhaps you may recognize her.” A pavement of heads, of various shapes and sizes and coverings, left me no clue. Still, I noted one corpulent lady who had jammed herself into the corner next the wall, to avoid

the elbows of her neighbours on one side. The green handkerchief brought under the chin as a preservative against the toothach, struck me as one I had seen worn by my landlady. But the half-view I got of the face of her next neighbour, convinced me she was the object of my research. This was her daughter-in-law (wife to her son the player). “There,” said I to the *llavera* (key-keeper), “there is Doña Teresa! but her daughter-in-law, who sits by her, bears the same name.”—“The name of her street?”—“Calle del Prado; call for Teresa *la mayor*.”—“Hombre? you don’t know how touchy people are. The eldest! who will answer to that? Let us try.”—“Doña Teresa!” At the name, I thought the whole company were baptized after that great saint, so many faces were turned towards the door. “She of the Calle del Prado, *la mayor*.”—“Vaya! what an idea! are we all grandmothers? what an impudent fellow!”—“Hi, hi, hi,” tittered the girls, a *duende en busca de una bruja*, (a sorcerer in search of an old witch). *Emplumarlos*—tar and feather ‘em both. Hi, hi, hi, bonito recado! (a pretty message truly).

Mariana! a glass of water, see if you can get in the naranjera (orange woman). My mouth is quite parched. Jesus! dios mio, I believe I shall die."—"Doña Teresa, *la mayor!* Here is your lodger inquiring for the key."—"Let him ask St. Peter for his," chattered some; "what an *aringa de hombre*, (bore of a man)! *fuera!* (out with him)!" "Hush! hush! Why does that old idiot let in such people?" grumbled a knot of cronies. "God knows what he is looking for!"—"I think I do. This keeper has become intolerable, I shall speak to Manuelito, nephew to the Corregidor, and have him turned out. Manuelito is very polite and attentive, and has always obliged me. I know the *Impresario* too, I generally see his wife at mass. This fellow shall be turned out."—But the Doña Teresa stirred not, until her daughter-in-law, more good-natured, directed her attention to what was passing; she, at last, looked round. How her eyes flashed! "Let him have patience, like other people, I am busy, and can't get out."—"Oh, yes! you can," said the crowd, who, I believe, envied her for the facilities with which

she secured tickets and good places. “Boy, get over this bench, we shall make room for you.” “Let out *la mayor!*”—“Respect years!” said others. In short, I got in to my lodgings that night, only to get out of them in a few days afterwards. Doña Teresa had a *sufoco*, took to her bed, and made things so agreeable, that I was forced to seek another resting place, and a *patrona* who was not mother to an actor, or a frequenter of the *casuela*.

The “*tertulia*” is another inclosure destined for the reception of ladies, who go to the theatre on special errands, or prefer a more economical expenditure. It unites the recommendation of considerable elevation to the incontestible ones of neither seeing nor hearing; it is the resort of the lowest class of females. The time is gone by, if it ever really existed, when the Lauras, the Estelles, Seraphinas, &c., immortalized by Lesage, turned people’s heads, and emptied their pockets. The heroines of the stage are indeed fallen from their high “estate.” They produce no sensation, and cause no scandal; not, perhaps, that morals are much

mended since the æra of the seducing Laura ; but, whatever be the cause, such is the fact. Caprice has turned into another road. Dramatic tenderness is chiefly confined to its own members. This, like most other illusions, has taken leave of the sapless sterile century we live in. I look forward to the day, when every thing, male and female, past fifteen, will be regularly provided with crucible and other aids to analysis, so as to have the consoling certitude of the composition, defects and merits of what formed the enjoyment of our less curious, but more simple and contented ancestors. We are driving fast upon the lee-shore of materialism, diligently occupied in divesting ourselves of the least shred that might, in any degree, qualify our too real deformity. People sneer at a glorious view, because they have satisfied themselves that it is, after all, but an optical illusion, an assemblage of colours, objects re-produced upon the *retina* of vision, a thing without real existence, a painted soap-bubble glittering in the sun ; whereas, the filthy lather and clay pipe should be the only objects

attended to by so logical and reasoning a being as man.

Isidoro Marquez was, notwithstanding, a comedian, who owed many amorous triumphs to his histrionic talents. The “hero of an hour,” managed, not unfrequently, to maintain the illusion for a much longer period in the susceptible bosom of some fair spectator. He was respected and sought after by the grandes of his time, as a man whose information and abilities did honour to his career.

Rita Luna, the female star of Spanish histrionic art, was not less distinguished than her great male contemporary. Tradition is, however, silent respecting the chains she may have forged for mankind, or the slaves attached to her triumphal car. Her personal attractions, it is true, were by no means in unison with her scenic powers. If the heroine sometimes caused the imperfections of the woman to be forgotten, scandal has not proclaimed the arts by which Rita Luna, when divested of the mantle and buskin, maintained her sway in the hearts of her admirers.

Of late days, the songstress, Albini, has been the only syren whose charms have produced an intoxicating effect on some members of the aristocracy. Albini's voice was her great attraction, for her claims to beauty were, by no means, remarkable. She was the fashion here, more perhaps on the strength of the old saying, “*dans le pays des aveugles, le borgne est roi,*” than any personal attractions she possessed. Be this as it may, it is not the less certain that here again “the course of true love never did run smooth.” The amorous duke who succumbed to the syren's temptations, forgot altogether what might be passing in the gentle bosom of his better half, or who had legal and church claims upon him. The forlorn duchess had recourse to that immaculate personage, his late majesty, King Ferdinand, VII., for advice and consolation under her affliction. The pious monarch took her wrongs and the cause of public morals so much to heart, as not only to order the Italian warbler out of his dominions, but to commit her noble paramour to the special charge of the “father” Bernardines,

in their convent of the Cabreras,* where he had the satisfaction to receive their ghostly attentions, and the advantage of communion with himself for the space of two years.

If the fortunes of the “mimic race” are fallen and reduced to the lowest ebb in this country, its members get no compensation in the prospects held out to them in the next world. While in France the church refuses the aid of bell, book, and candle, to the corpse of an actor, and denies to his remains the poor favour of an hour’s lodging in the church, on their way to the sepulchre, in Spain, things are managed in a much more Christian-like manner. Actors, both male and female, may look forward with pleasure and security, “when they have shifted off this mortal coil,” to enjoy the privilege of resting themselves on a handsome black bier, before the high altar of

* The convent of the “Cabreras,” situated in a most cheerless wilderness, about eight leagues from Madrid, to the left of the Bayonne road. It is used as a house of correction for refractory ecclesiastics, and, in this case, amorous laymen.

the church of St. Sebastian, and of enjoying the light of at least four wax tapers at the head and foot. A very tolerable requiem is sung for the repose of the departed spirit, and in their own chapel too, which makes it doubly agreeable.

The administration of the theatres is as bad as it can possibly be. Public accommodation is never studied, while the abuses tolerated in the distribution of "tickets" are of the superlative order. The persons entrusted with their sale, make a regular traffic of it. Should the entertainment announced for the night be popular, the door-keepers contrive to secure the larger proportion of tickets in their own hands, in the prospect, not unfrequently realized, of gaining cent. per cent. on the transaction. The ticket office is open to the public about nine in the morning, long before which hour a crowd of servants, small speculators, orderlies, officers, and civilians, have taken their stations at the door. When it does at last turn on its hinges, the rush is tremendous, and the bayonets and exertions of the sentries, do not always

prevent serious accidents, and even loss of life. So much eagerness is most ungratefully repaid; some fifty or sixty tickets, not more, are doled out at the legal price of half-a-crown. The rest are reserved for higher bidders, and bring from a dollar to a dollar and half. Abuse and threats, of the most violent kind, are showered upon the sharpening agents, who, secure behind thick iron gratings, quietly brave the storm.

A new and very large theatre has recently been built in the Plazuela del Oriente. The dimensions of this are nearly the same as those of the San Carlo, at Naples. It will be a great eye-sore to the palace, as the exterior design possesses no architectural beauty. Whether the amusement will compensate for this drawback, time only will show. Its site is bad, being at one end of the town, and evidently selected with less reference to public accommodation, than to the exclusive convenience of the Royal Family. It should, however, be mentioned, that the foundation of the present edifice was laid many years back, at a time when public convenience and accommodation

were even less looked to than they are at present. I must now shut my show-box, and let the curtain drop, begging of the “gentle reader” not to be so ill-natured as to give me an “encore.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Tertulias.

ALMOST every house in Madrid, from the back room of the shop to the palace, has its *tertulia*, or circle of acquaintance, who come to spend the evening, sitting round the *brazero* during winter, in the balconies during summer, and chat over and repeat the gossip and anecdotes of the day, and discuss the thousand-and-one reports which are abroad, and serve to delight the inhabitants of this news-thirsty city. During the intervals, they call in the friendly aid of the *Havanna*, *puro*, *pajilla*, or *papeleta*, and

gradually envelop the circle in an ambrosial cloud, giving something of the goddess attributes of ancient mythology to the ladies there assembled, part of their dress and persons being visible to mortals, the rest hidden in a vapoury veil, nowise repugnant to the smell or nerves.* Taste being a matter of convention and comparison, criticism here is out of place. A novice, however, could find it difficult not to admire the wondrous feats performed by the amateurs of the cigar, to attract the notice of the ladies, and excite the envy of their less intrepid companions. At one moment, one of those gifted beings discharges a column of blue smoke first down one nostril, then down the other, while the vulgar crowd are contented to get it well

* The custom of smoking in society is universal throughout Spain, even in the best circles. In those where civilization has made most advances, old habits and modern delicacy are in some measure reconciled by appropriating a room exclusively to the smokers. They are not permitted to enjoy themselves in the *sala* where the *soirée* is held. The aromatic root, however, is savoured from afar off, and the clothes of the men import quite enough of it to please any reasonable person.

out of their mouths. When he sees curiosity on the wane, a vapour proceeding from his eye, rouses attention and applause. Though smoke from such a pore is, in itself, a phenomenon, the production of which might well satisfy the ambition and exertions of a long life, still emulation, *laudisque immensa cupido*—that passion which moved Brutus to the slaughter of his own offspring, increases with the difficulty of the performance. The organs of eating, of smelling, and of vision, have been made subservient to the cigar; a cloud of smoke, inhaled in the usual way, issuing again in graceful wreath from one or both of the organs of hearing, according as the caprice or versatility of genius may suggest, indicates that the *ne plus ultra* of the art has been attained. Such acquirements constitute, undoubtedly, new and strong claims to a favourable reception in society; but they are not indispensable.

No place offers such perfect social facility as the Spanish *tertulia*. Any body presented by any other body at all known to the master of the house, is sure to be politely received,

and, unless in some very peculiar case, offered the house,—the usual compliment paid to a stranger, or new acquaintance. The great demoralization of society in Spain, may be attributed, in no small degree, to this unbounded admission of a nameless crowd, destitute even of the slightest pretensions to birth, talent, or character, into the best houses of the capital and country, where they elbow, and are elbowed, by the most distinguished individuals in the nation, on a footing of the most perfect equality.

The Spaniards are naturally a social and good-natured race, little given to suspicion in such relations, when the persons composing or intruding on them offer no probability of competition or rivalry in their respective careers. In houses where play is permitted, they are received as tributary streams to the great ocean ; when there is a fiddle, they are planets of the first magnitude, being for the most part unembarrassed with superfluous flesh, an active race, with elastic limbs, often depending on them and their wits for subsistence. They dance from the first rigorous *tutti* of the orchestra to its last qua-

vering notes. They afford salutary and agreeable exercise to many *muchachas*, whose looks or persons might repel less enterprising cavaliers. Mothers are pleased, sometimes grateful; new doors open to those sons of fortune, and they are soon declared to be the “nicest men of the whole *tertulia*.”* A decent coat and look, and

* Severer judges would condemn this chivalry, and without any question of conscience, to the galleys of Ceuta, where they are more worthy to figure than in the saloons of a capital. One individual of this class, with ideas more hardy and enlarged than his fellows, not content with having run the gauntlet of fortune with success and impunity, nor satisfied with the advantages which his youth and assurance had procured him, conceived that his destiny beckoned him to court the blaze of royalty. After various preliminary evolutions with his opera-glass at the theatres, constantly directing it towards the royal box, he determined on a closer investment. He demanded and obtained an audience of the Queen, through the medium of persons too apt to lend their names to such abuses of royal condescension. Admitted to the “presence,” he made a flourishing harangue, concluding after the manner of the east, by presenting between his fore-finger and thumb, a rich and sweet smelling nosegay to her majesty, who, though astonished at the present, received it with her usual urbanity, unwilling to

the show of a few ounces, are much better passports to society, than the best character and station. The master of the house is frequently ignorant of the quality and circumstances of his guests. The usual answer to the query, “Do you know that man?”—“No, I know nothing at all about him, he was introduced by so-and-so, who comes here often, but he appears a *buen sujeto muy fino y atento* (a good young man, very polite and attentive).

The hour of assembling is, generally, from ten to twelve, to mortify the feelings of the donor. A perfumed billet, *couleur de rose*, dropped from the chalice of a flower on the carpet. The adventurer was glad to be only “turned out” for his daring; but the impunity which he owed to the kind intercession of her majesty, only emboldened him to continue his indiscreet attentions to the royal box. At length, the late king was struck with his conduct, and, on finding him to be the hero of the nosegay, ordered him off immediately to the castle of Alicanta. There his modesty entitled him to promotion to the galleys at Ceuta, where he remained until within the last few months, when he reappeared in the streets of Madrid, renewed his ancient intrigues, and is received as if he had just stepped out of the cleansing waters of the Jordan. This man’s father was a hatter in Murcia.

to eleven. There are some *amigos de casa*, however, who drop in to get rid of the earliest and heaviest part of their evening, until the theatre begins. The family *tertulias* seldom exceed from eight to a dozen persons, accustomed to see and ask in an absent way, after one another's health, three hundred and sixty-five times in the year. Each guest brings his tribute to the pic nic of intellectual entertainment; an anecdote of domestic felicity; a "row" in the *Barrios bajos*, or Calle St. Antonio; what their majesties did, and how they looked as they whirled past them; if the minister appeared *de mal humor* (in a bad humour); some people, *echados* in a "Jesus," turned out of their *alozes* in a trice. If the monthly pay is regular, much sickness in town, and who are dying or dead; the whole wound up by a discussion, whether the chocolate at ten reals the pound, ground and concocted in the mill of the Plazuela Santa Anna, or that of Biscaynos, is the best. This is as ticklish a subject as comparing one's *fe de bautismo*; for every human being in Spain takes chocolate, and flatters himself he is a connois-

seur in it. Such a topic usually brings after it, cool nods, and distant looks for a few days.

About half-a-dozen houses in the whole capital receive company, and take a day, or two days in the week for their *tertulia*. The Spaniards in their mode of receiving friends, are a great deal more rational than their continental brethren ; and, above all, give a wholesome lesson, worthy of imitation, to English emulation and extravagance in this way. When the lady of a house opens it to company, she does not consider herself bound to go to a heavy expense in procuring an abundant variety of refreshment for her guests. She presumes that they come there to dance, to flirt, and enjoy themselves, and not to discriminate between *granizado** (frozen drink), *mantecadas* (ice-creams), *gaufres*, and short cake, Roman punch, and jellies, and then go and tell all their friends and acquaintances next day. “ Well, my dears, after all, Doña * * * * ’s pretensions and apings à la *Francesa*, it was a sad failure. Every thing

* *Granizado*, frozen drink, *mantecàda*, ice made with cream.

was bad, and, between ourselves, not enough of it. As for the *sangria*,* it was really abominable. Then did you taste those *bollos* (spunge-cakes)? I, that doat upon them, and meant to *repetir* (repeat), could not eat one; the *manteça* was so rancid. *Jesus que asco?* Do you know, I suspect she contracted with Soli's for all his *bebidas pasadas* ‘stale refreshments.’ Poor Dolores! she had such a cholic all the night afterwards! *Vaya!* what vanity! better give a good glass of water and *buenvenida* (welcome), if things are not to be done properly.”

To avoid all this suite of cholic and discussion, trays of glasses, with sparkling water are handed round, sometimes accompanied by “*Volados*,”†

* This is a very refreshing draught when well made, and a great favourite in warm climates. It is composed of equal portions of wine and water, lemon juice, sufficient to give a pungent flavour, and sugar, *ad libitum*.

† This happy invention bears different names in Spanish in the different provinces. *Volados*, *esponjados*, *azucarillos*, *panales*, &c., &c., are all synonymous expressions for the same thing. It is a porous stick or mass of crystallized sugar, slightly flavoured with lemon juice. It dissolves instantaneously in water, affording a most grateful and re-

and much oftener not. After the first circuit, people make love and say good-natured things of one another in strict confidence ; however, they take exercise, get an appetite, and go home to their own suppers, such as they may be. This is certainly more independent and comfortable, seeing that any gentleman or gentle-woman can take their ease in their own houses, and sup *en cueros*, or *paños menores*, if the heat and caprice require it.* There is no want of crowded rooms on those occasions. They are

freshing drink in hot weather. This luxury, entirely Spanish, is gradually introducing itself into France. *Volados* are now to be found both at Bordeaux and Paris, but, like the chocolate, they will bear no comparison with those of Spain.

* The inhabitants of southern climates are naturally more jealous of their “case” in point of clothing, than those of the north. A Spaniard or Italian will often renounce the best covered table, where etiquette would keep his coat on his back, in favour of his *puchero* and salad in his shirt. The ladies naturally lean to the same simplicity of toilet under the same circumstances. *Paños menores* compose the under garments, not generally meant to receive visitors. *En cueros*, is literally in a state of nature. But it is used in its mitigated sense in conversation, and signifies, very lightly clad.

generally crammed to suffocation, to the great joy of timid and awkward dancers, who take courage in the squeeze, sacrifice their neighbour's or their partner's toes and tibiae, without remorse. Some masters and mistresses call in the assistance of the gaming table, to pay the wax lights, and wear and tear of the furniture. Though a forbidden pastime, it is not the less eagerly pursued, producing a schism between the youth of both sexes. The chances of the dice, or cards, are preferred by the men to the gentle converse of the fair sex. If they feel the slight, they do not join in the cause of it. Fewer female gamblers are to be met with in society in Spain, than any other country in Europe.*

On such nights, there is a very fair display of

* A young married woman may commit a peccadillo, and yet find pardon and indulgence; but public opinion is not so merciful towards female gamblers. A young female is hardly ever seen at a gaming table; if she must lose her money, she begs of some "friend" to join with her, and play her chance. "Old ladies," already at cross purposes with themselves and the world, ornament the green cloth, and play, and sometimes cheat, if they can, with an avidity highly praiseworthy.

beauty, and considerable variety of costume and “coiffure,” from the Spanish ladies being much less slaves to the “mode” than their French neighbours. The dressing of the hair is never subject to that capricious sprite, but adapted to the style of countenance of the wearer; a speaking, sentimental true Spanish face, would be ruined if surcharged with a profusion of extravagant curls, making the *chorefleur* on their cheeks, or strained or tortured into folds, *à la Chinoise*. This important secret of the toilet is perfectly understood in this country. If any swain is observed in a dying state at the feet of his mistress, his malady may be safely attributed to “exclusive love;” for all idea of fortune is absolutely out of the question, in a country where even the daughters of grandees bring no dowry to their husbands, unless their parents have been prudent enough to lay by a few thousand dollars for the purpose, a provision of which instances are rarely met with.*

* There are, of course, some exceptions to this rule. In Spain, are to be found large fortunes, and heiresses to boot. But the number of these, in proportion to that of their pennyless sisters, amounts absolutely to Zero.

The general appearance of a Spanish *tertulia*, is less animated than the reunions of other nations. *Here*, the sexes separate as if by common consent, or obliged thereto. The men get together in *corillos* (round knots), and their conversation turns exclusively on the ups and downs of court favour; the placing and displacing of *employés*. But one peculiarity must forcibly strike a stranger, and that is, the familiarity with which both men and women speak of public affairs and public characters; of the ministers of the royal family itself. These different topics are discussed in a homely family way, as if the persons spoken of, were employed by mere chance, but still forming a common class with their critics. Public employments, always partake so much of oriental uncertainty, that it is not uncommon to see ex-ministers mixing in the ring, commenting upon and censuring the acts of their successors, denouncing the insolence of office, and other vices usually laid at the door of men in power, with a degree of unceremoniousness and freedom, that would never lead you to think that they had themselves ever filled an office, or had any chance of ever being thrown into it

again by a sudden jerk of the wheel of fortune. Two or three privileged persons, who get a peep behind the curtain, are seen allowing themselves to be entreated to let out some recall, or some dismissal, which cannot reach the general emporium, (the *Puerta del Sol*) before twelve the next day.

The women set together, evidently more from habit than choice, on low divans, or cushioned benches, placed along the wall, most of them looking vacantly before them, two friends whispering a secret, others hiding a yawn with their fans, whose quick or slow openings and shuttings alone break the silence, all reposing body and soul in expectation of some more congenial pastime. “It is not yet ten o’clock, Jesus! How long the opera lasts to-night! I believe it will never be over. No *lechugino* dares present himself, until even the candle-snuffer is out of the theatre, for fear we should think he had not been there. I am sure we know *mas que tres*, (who have not bought a *luneta** this season,

* *Masquetres* is one of the many familiar expressions in Spanish, where the part means the whole; *more than three*

dropping in the last, and talking of the Jose and Grisi, as if they had been listening to them the whole evening. *Sin duda se crean muy deseados*, (they think they are a great loss to us no doubt). At length, the men begin to make their appearance, and pass down the long file to seek and put themselves “at the feet” of the mistress of the house — *Vaya! que orgullositos se han puesto los Señoritos!*. (What fine fellows these young gentlemen have become). Señora! they take no notice of any body!”

The fashionably late-comers of both sexes now fill the room, the scene gets more animated. Marriages that have just taken place, those probable, or only talked of, supply a considerable part of the conversation, for here it is not considered at all improper, that a young lady should talk of that which is her only hope of figuring in society, and naturally occupies most of her attention, as, in a different way, it does every where else. Dissimulation is better taught farther north.

in this sum stands for any number of individuals; a *luneta*, is the ticket for one of the stuffed seats in the pit, already alluded to in the preceding chapter on the theatres.

“Have you heard of Antonita’s marriage?” said a maker of *decimas*,* a great lady’s man, and considered the best judge of a ‘neat, not gaudy,’ pattern for a scarf or veil in the very loyal and very heroic city of Madrid; one who, besides a felicitous memory in such matters, had always at his finger ends a list of every birth, marriage, and death, of the whole Corte, which could at all interest the *tertulias* he enlivened by his poetical presence. He had also a passable knack at translating French *oubliettes*, and adapting them to the Spanish stage. “Shall I tell you all about this *boda*? ” said he. “Si, Hombre! do let us hear it.” “Antonita!” screamed an elderly maiden, “is *she* going to be married? she who halts a little on her left leg.”—“*Es a misma!*” (the very same), and to a *buen mozo y rico*.† “Indeed! well, God

* *Decima*, a favorite species of poetical composition in Spain. It is composed of ten lines, as the name indicates.

† A fine young man; this term of *buen mozo* is very vague indeed. It means any thing above five feet eight inches; any thing full, fat, and stout built, has claims to this title. Beauty is by no means necessary to bear it. The same applies to the other sex.

knows, men are queer creatures! Not that I mean to say she is not a good girl, and may make an honest man happy."—"Do you think her *genio* (temper) good?" and, Pilarcita! what do you say of her?" added a cotemporary of the elderly young lady. "Vaya! vaya! What bad tongues people have! Pobrecita! Though certainly I saw her myself yesterday at the procession, with a *lujo* (a finery), really enough to sour the best-tempered person. Only think of her parading about in a *maja's* dress, with trimmings of the richest cut velvet and silk embroidery, studded with beads, and ornaments of the most expensive jet; and a *mantilla*, that would be cheap at 3,000 reals (30*l*). Have any of you heard of her inheriting a *mayorazgo*?"—"I have not."—"People talked of her in a very ill-natured way—Where was all that to come from? Foreign *diplomatico*, and so forth. But, as I always say, why shouldn't the poor thing dress if she likes it? She knows best where she gets the means, and how. Jesus! I hate scandal."—"Chicas! (girls!) do you know poor

Mercedes is very unwell?"—"Oh!" said the poet, "her *nobia* has left her, I understand."—"Mentira! (It is not true), I saw her this morning in bed. She caught a *constipado* coming out of the *casuela* last night. She has taken a good dose of cream of tartar, and will be here to-morrow. *A proposito!* talking of the theatre, I can assure you, my aunt and I were very indignant with that old puffed-up *majadera* of a countess, who thinks herself the lord knows what, and yet looks like a *verdulera*.* I am very fond of Joaquinita, her daughter, she is very lively, and says such droll things. But as to her mother, there is no satisfying her whims. She arrived late in town, and could get no subscription at the theatre. As she was an old acquaintance, and coming here every night, we thought it but civil to ask her to join us, taking half our box. Pues! She accepted the offer as if she was doing us the greatest favour possible.

* A *verdulera* (literally, a *vegetable hawker*), is one of the strongest terms of reproach that can be applied to any one, with the slightest pretensions to respectability.

When it came to her turn,* a few of the *muchachos*, friends of ours, opened the door; she did not exactly turn them out, but she looked so sour, and flounced about so on her chair, that they saw plainly they had mistaken their time. This is not all. The old kite, under pretence of trying the box, and making such a fuss about nothing in the second row† (as if the place changed one's flesh and blood), kept us so long in surprise, ultimately declining the partnership, that, had it not been for my cousin, who happened to come from Avila to spend the winter, we should have had no box at all."—" You are quite right, Caytana," said Dolores, "she is an odious old woman. But, for my part, I am most amused and occupied in observing the airs some people give themselves, especially in the boxes

* Boxes taken in two shares alternate between the owners. The friends of both being generally indiscriminately admitted, whenever they choose to enter. This is another instance of the easy sociability of the Spaniards.

† The lower tier of boxes is good, but the second still better; it corresponds with the dress boxes in an English theatre.

opposite, where the inevitable family of a buxom widow, and three plump little girls, with the usual tail of admirers, are ever to be seen, and all so like one another, that so many similar heads looking one way, appear a sub-division of the same face. Talking of faces, how do you like the little English singer, *Addock*, or *Dock*, or *Dog?* — (*Que se' yo*, God only knows how those northern names are pronounced.) She is *bonita*, although English.* Hush ! here comes the famous *ambustero*,† Don Joaquin ; do try and close the chairs, so that he may not find

* This phrase will sound strange to English female ears, accustomed to hear themselves set down as the prettiest women in Europe. The Spanish women are not to be blamed for this rash judgment ; they can only judge in such matters by what they see, and, unluckily for the reputation of British comeliness, almost every female who has directed her steps to Spain, has been “ passing plain.”

† This man was well-known in Paris for his manners and eccentricities. He gave, now and then, splendid balls ; and introduced himself, in this popular way, to society in Paris. He lent out money in small sums, at usurious interest, and took all kinds of property in pledge. One characteristic anecdote will suffice : The Duchess of *** was once

room ; he is so tiresome, always telling the same *bolas*.—"Ah ! Nievecita—yes, a good name ! Snow indeed, white as the purest *vaya*. This child put me in mind of a young creature who once fell violently in love with me—at first sight too.—Poor thing ! I had never paid her any attention. She saw me, it is true, lolling in my cabriolet once or twice in the *Bois de Boulogne*. I solemnly protest, I suppress every circumstance flattering to my vanity ; I relate but the simple

obliged to pawn her jewels, and thought it more convenient and secret to entrust them to the care of her friend Don Joaquin. In the interval, he thought it necessary to his interest to give a ball, to which the Duchess was invited. She wished to sport her diamonds on the occasion, and applied for them. Don Joaquin lent himself with the best grace to her wishes, but imposed certain pecuniary sacrifices, which nearly covered the expense of the entertainment. Besides which, she was obliged to submit to the humiliation of putting them on and taking them off in his house. His inventions respecting himself, and adventures, can only be surpassed by the celebrated Baron Munchausen. Don Joaquin was not only one of the ugliest, but also one of the most unsavoury men in existence ; and believed most firmly his inventions to be facts. The story of the English nabob's daughter is given literally as it came from his own mouth.

fact.—To be brief: her parents, to save her life, came tormenting me to marry her. She was an English girl—daughter of an Indian nabob—enormously rich—7 0 millions of reals (700,000*L.*). I had not yet made up my mind.—They, however, persuaded me to go and see her in the '*pension*,' when she became so smitten with me, that she fainted in my arms! I thought no more about the matter, until some months afterwards, when I was at a large party, in which this young lady happened to be. I contented myself with a simple recognition, and passed on to chat with a charming woman, whom, by the way, I had afterwards a great deal of difficulty to shake off. Pues!—I had not got the first complimentary phrases out of my mouth, when the poor child, no longer able to contain her jealousy and resentment, starts from her seat, crosses rapidly the saloon and pong! gives me such a box on my ear, that it still rings with the blow.—I felt a great deal for her—but what can a man do? Caspita! Why was I not born with a *careta* (a mask) on? Well! the poor girl grieved and pined away—died, I dare say.—Are those things

my fault?"—"Well, Joaquin," said the mistress of the house, "this story deserves a fine."—"Como? fact on my soul."—"Caramelo, Joaquin, give the *muchachos* some 'dulces,' if not too stale (for I know you buy the cheapest), and no more stories. I want you to take a hand at *tresilio* in the next room."

At that moment, Maria Pepa, a well-known character, rolled herself into the room. This lady had the singular recommendation of appearing to equal advantage before and behind, possessing an exact similarity of form in both directions. Her breadth slightly exceeded her stature. She had been celebrated in her youth for her "good-nature," and was so now for the liberality with which she gave her money and her counsels to young and good-looking people, in every thing appertaining to the tender union. She took the greatest pains to dress to the height of the Paris fashions, surpassing the *figurinas* (models) received every month, in the extravagance of cut and colour. She looked, in short, like any thing but a woman with a bonnet on; still, the young people of both sexes liked

her for her eccentricity and good-nature.*—“Good night, girls! How are ye all? well and frisky, I don’t doubt—amusing yourselves with the ‘*muchachos*,’ eh? quite right, quite right. I would do the same myself, if I could. But how is it that the monte table † is not ‘set out?’ Vamos, muchacho,—lights and cards.—There’s

* Maria Pepa, although so little prepossessing in her appearance, played a very conspicuous part in political court intrigue, until the re-action of the year 1830. She had been formerly “*camarota*,” or maid of honour, to Maria Louisa; and always managed to retain her influence in the palace, where everything in the way of preferment and intrigue takes its source. She was feared and respected in the various ministries,—placed her husband in one of the most lucrative posts under the crown, and procured minor employments for her *cicisbers*, according as she changed them. She is now reflecting on the mutability of court favor in La Mancha.

† *Monte* is one of the most gambling combinations of hazard yet invented. It is more expeditious than *Rouge et Noir*, and quite as bad as *Hazard*. The cards are called, and stakes placed on them; four or five different calculations or bets may be made on three cards. Any gambler may “*copar*,” or call the “bank” on a card; if he wins, the funds are his; if he loses, he must pay double the amount. The details of this game, so popular and so ruin-

the ‘Marquis,’ who will cut for me. More *aficionados* coming in. Boy, shuffle; ‘Marquis.’—Pepito! come here and sit down by me, and hold my purse; I am constantly letting it fall.” Thus saying, she empties her reticule of a considerable sum in gold, and thrusting her hand into some recondite corner, between her stays and person, produced two rolls of ounces (dubloons). “There, I have got money for my friends; if we lose, we lose; if we win, we win—Pepito and I will go shares.” Pepito was a young stripling, with down yet on his cheeks, who simpered out, “Como usted guste (as you please).”—“Vaya,” observed the poet, “she will lose all that, and double, if she had it; and there are not wanting those to help themselves to her money, through forgetfulness or mistake.”—“Que muger tan loca! (what a madcap she is)!” said all the *muchachos*—“it is a pity, with so good a heart.”

By this time the room was fuller than the architect had ever calculated upon;—two fiddles and a flute set a considerable number of legs in motion, are too prolific and tiresome to be dwelt upon here.—A fortune may be squandered in an hour.

motion, whirling round in a waltz, and bumping constantly against spectators, or couples who were too much occupied with themselves, or too lazy to go faster. There was one *soltero* (bachelor) and *mayorazgo*, a man worth full three thousand dollars a-year, in houses in the best streets and in *metalico*, who seemed to take great pleasure in opposing his person to the *impetus* of the waltzers, and causing as much annoyance and confusion as might fall to the share of a single person. There was no enticing him into dancing of any description;—he was proof against the winning smiles and persuasive looks of every marriageable girl in the room. With his *petaca* in hand, he would force his way out to light and smoke his cigar, and return with a stump in his mouth, and the same determination to be in every body's way. It was in vain a man like this could not ruffle the smooth temper of any spinster.—“Ay! que malo, que picarito (what a waggish little rogue), how entertaining he is!” were the only anathemas hurled against his vulgarity. Some enterprising damsels, very fond of dancing, kept themselves disen-

gaged, in the hope that Don Lorenzo might relent in their favour.—“Que buenas rentas tiene” (what good rents he has), said the mothers, “the best match, perhaps, in town.”—“Do you know if he has got a mistress? It is very odd he don’t marry. He was entangled for some time with my Romualda, but, like an eel or an apple pippin, he was off in a twinkling. He is very much of a fox.”—“What would you have? All the men are become a heap of egotists: enjoy themselves, and pass away the time. Vamos! I confess I am out of all patience, and can’t endure them—a marriage is now as rare as a thin friar.”—“Oh, Maria! only see how Antonio Herrard dances! He is like a piece of Indian rubber: he slips through his steps so gracefully.”—“Well, Soledad, I think he waltzes better than he dances *rigodones*.—Chica! if you only saw how mad a certain countess looked, who, poor woman, still thinks herself young because he danced all night with Nieves. How I enjoyed it! I hate old women, they are so envious and backbiting, though I am sure they were bad enough, and a great deal worse than we ever

shall be, if all was known.”—“Lean lightly upon age, young ladies,” interrupted an officer of the Guards, who conceived himself a sayer of good things, and a most dangerous mortal with the other sex, “I am over head and ears in love with a lady who might be my mother;—‘Old Toledo blades, old woman! that is my motto.’” Saying this, he took the round-topped poker of the *brazero*, to smooth its dusty sides and give air to the olive kernels burning in the middle, heedless of the great annoyance of the lady of the house. “I suppose,” said she, “you meant that *indirecta* for me, flattering old woman. I am one, and don’t care who knows it; my *fé de bautismo* is no secret. That will not prevent me from requesting you will not spoil the *brazero*.^{*} You

* There are three sorts of *brazero*. 1. The modest chafing-dish of the porter’s lodges, shops, and public offices,—an iron bottom in a deal frame, usually ornamented with marks and designs, executed by a hot poker. 2. The *brazero* of walnut-wood, with brazen dish. This soothes the toes of the middle classes. 3. The *brazero* of satin-wood or mahogany frame, with brazen dish and embossed handle; in this only olive kernels are used for fuel, yielding little or no gas; a little sugar, apple, or lemon-peel thrown into it,

are causing a great *tufo*: pray leave it alone.” “It is a proof of *talento* in Almedra, to be always employed in making herself disagreeable,” observed the young ladies. “Shall I tell you a story?” said he, nothing discomposed, “about an old woman and her *brazero*?”—“Oh, no! boy, do not put yourself out of your way,” exclaimed several voices together, “or you will send us all to sleep, like Rita there, who cannot remain a quarter of an hour awake.”—“Wait till the *Oidor* comes,” said the Guardsman, “you will then see her brighten up,* y despavilare,” (snuff herself). “Or if you dance with her,” said Nieves. “Me, God forfend! Would I could exchange my epaulettes for a *canonigo’s*

gives an agreeable perfume to the apartment. In the *recibi miento*, or state room, the *brazero* is covered with a shining wire cage for ornament, and defence of this “sacred fire.” One must be very intimate indeed in a family, to attempt to disturb the sleek sides of this apology for warmth; it is regarded as a very great liberty, to take a poker to a *brazero*.

* A phrase of familiar conversation, taken from “snuffing a candle,” thereby increasing its light.

hat in Toledo, I would renounce dancing and womankind for ever more, they are so conspicuous." "A good exchange," for the *soutane* would suit you better than a uniform; you would not be under the necessity of showing your unpretending *pantorillas* (calves) at a court levee, which you must regard as a great penance." The lieutenant seemed fully prepared to defend with vigour so essential a part of his person, when the flute and fiddles stopped short, and left some couples in the midst of a *chassez*, rousing a sleepy spectator, who pulled out his watch, and declared it was one o'clock in the morning. The mothers became alarmed for the fresh looks of their daughters; the particoloured heap of shawls and scarfs, mantillas, and bonnets, in the antechamber, was rummaged by fair and taper fingers, aided by the efforts of obliging partners. By the time that all the *tertulia* was becloaked and shawled, and handkerchiefs carefully tied under their chins, and it was two o'clock, maternal experience was then heard from the top of the stairs, warning their daughters already at the bottom (it is singular how the

young ladies always love their parents on those occasions) not to catch cold, to see that their pattens were properly secured, &c. The evening was declared very pleasant ; then came the confusion of—*Adios! hasta mañana ; vaya abour—a los pies de usted*, and, in a far more subdued and tender tone, “ Farewell ! most fascinating ! Shall you be at the theatre to-morrow ? What box and number ? Do drive to the Prado.”—“ Pepita ! Pepita ! where are you ?” “ Here, mamma !—adios Antonio ! Well—yes—I shall be there. How quick mamma settles herself. Farewell.”—“ There will be a procession after to-morrow.”—“ Good —”

The tone of society in the middling and highest classes is absolutely the same ; the only difference consists in those who are richer than their neighbours, wearing more expensive dresses, and going in a carriage, instead of on foot in the primitive way, lighted by their man or woman servant with a resin flambeau, to avoid ruts and pools, or by the more ingenious device of a trained poodle, bearing two equipoised lanterns on a stick between his teeth, and trotting out

friendly before the family. In point of manners and information, the class of private gentry, bankers, and private merchants, have a decided advantage over the grandees,* whose pretensions to social superiority must rest solely on their ancestral recollections, property, and privilege, until they choose to adopt an entirely opposite system with regard to themselves and children. Some of the ministers have also their *tertulias*, but the line is too distinctly drawn between the protector and the protected, the suppliant and the arbiter of his good or evil fortune, to cite them as models of manners. Some little scope to gaiety is given in the *sala*, where his excel-

* It is perhaps necessary to elucidate more fully the distinction between “middling classes” and the *grandeza*. Every body, or almost every body, is noble in Spain, *i. e.* tacks the *Don* to his name, and has a coat of arms engraved over his door, be he but a peasant or an artisan. I do not include them in the middling class in Spain. This, according to English notions, embraces the minor nobility, men of good family and some property, the higher ranks of the magistracy, military men, bankers, and principal merchants. Education has made much greater progress among them than among their superiors in rank.

lency is not ; but on crossing its threshold, the countenance assumes a greater longitude; the voice, a deep *bass* outside, is now a very delicate *falso*.” Should the *brazeros* or fireplaces be occupied, and the man in power approach, they are abandoned with a perilous precipitation, to give his excellency ample room and verge : here no dissentient voice is heard ; it is an everlasting “Si, Señor tiene V. E. mucha razon,” or a silent hanging on the golden periods coming from his lips. People go there as a merchant goes on ‘Change, to learn news, if they can, and turn it to their profit ; it is an evening of business, not of *tertulia* or society.

The diplomatic *soirées* resemble those of all Europe ; they are not so fully attended as might be expected, partly from *mauvaise honte*, partly from the general ignorance of foreign languages, and partly from prudence or calculation, from an idea that the government looks with distrust on such of its servants as frequent the foreign diplomatic residences. This is having but a poor opinion of the Spanish government, and of themselves. In the event, however, of a ball being

announced, all scruples vanish; all opinions and parties are agreed on that subject. The pleasure of dancing to a good orchestra, and enjoying delicate refreshments, and a good supper, is sufficient to reconcile every thing, to produce a social truce for twenty-four hours at least.

CHAPTER XIV.

Masked Balls. —

THE licence of the Carnival, so dear to the southern nations of Europe, had been long a stranger to the Spanish soil. Suspicion, the gnawing worm of despotism, gradually deprived its victims even of their social enjoyments. In Barcelona alone could the mask be worn with impunity,—a special privilege obtained by that very loyal city, from the government, some forty years ago, at the expense, no doubt, of a very handsome contribution to the protector's purse : a wholesome

custom strictly observed and insisted upon to the present day.*

The actual government allows every reasonable latitude in matters of amusement; and it

* It is so well understood in Spain, that nothing is to be had or expected *gratis*, that the first step is always a present to the supposed influential quarter, proportioned to the value of the object sought for. When Cadiz was made a free port in 1829, the man who then possessed the “royal ear,” and overpowered all opposition, received a gift of four millions of reals (40,000 cents.) If the inhabitants of a province are anxious for a canal or road to be opened, *regalos* are distributed in proper time and place. Barcelona has made brilliant offers to be made a free port; St. Sebastian has bid tempting sums to be allowed to trade with the *ci-devant* colonies. This system pervades all classes of society. A poor widow, whose only son had enlisted contrary to the regulation, and without her consent, came to solicit his discharge. She travelled several leagues on foot, with a large basket filled with fat capons, and a mountain ham, as peace-offerings to present before opening her errand. In this instance, the suit was successful; at the same time the present was declined,—a piece of good fortune which does not happen one time in a thousand, and of the reality of which the poor woman was with difficulty persuaded.

would be difficult, without witnessing it, to conceive the eagerness with which the citizens avail themselves of their newly-acquired right to spend their money, and hide their faces. The Spanish domination in Italy brought from the conquered country, among other importations, the use of the mask, not merely as an ally to intrigue and pleasure, but to shroud the assassin from the vengeance of the laws. “This favourite resource of playwrights and romance-writers found a flattering reception from the Spanish fair, whose taste for amorous intrigue was too deeply-rooted to overlook the immense advantages to be derived from this friendly sash of silk, sacred from the touch of jealous husbands or suspicious lovers.” It lent its mysterious aid also to impassioned adorers of youthful beauties, sighing through the keyholes of well-locked and bolted doors, or waving a perfumed handkerchief between the sturdy bars of their fathers’ houses, in gratitude for the “gentle music” which the serenaders lavished on the listening ear of night.

The mantle, mask, guitar, and basket-hilted rapier, were the inseparable companions of the

caballero in brawl and lady's bower for many centuries. The *Careta*, though often prohibited under severe penalties, was too faithful a friend to be readily abandoned; nor was it finally disused until more modern cavaliers thought it shame and pity to conceal their own seducing features, or bowed with greater submission to the dictates and menaces of power. Ever since the time of that sad rake and type of "dear false men," Don Juan Oslorio of Seville, and the sad catastrophe of his masked ball, and Doña Anna, (who, by the way, was enough to try the temper of a less hasty cavalier,) we can hear of no entertainments of this kind in Spain to equal those which may now be engaged for thirty or forty reals a ticket, in any of the too numerous assemblages of masks in Madrid.

Long privation, it is said, creates fresh appetites. This we take to be the reason why the approach of the Carnival is now an object of such peculiar interest to the men, as it certainly turns the heads of all the women in the capital. In addition to the usual shop-exhibitions, one sees nothing in the streets but Turks and Chris-

tians, shepherds and shepherdesses, soldiers and sailors, *hidalgos*, *Gallegos*, *Andalusians* and *Mara-gates*, ancient men-at-arms, and mantled Alguacils, suspended by the heads or necks, and dangling in fair confusion out of first, second, and third stories on both sides of the way, inviting the passengers to adopt their costumes and suspension, if thereto inclined. At night, the fancy dress warehouses do all that oil and wax-light can achieve to entice the votaries of pleasure to inspect their rows of motley dominos and masks. Abigail's and their mistresses are seen gliding into the reserved apartments, to combine a plan of disguise and signal, to baffle the prying looks of matrimony, and favour those they should not.

The Spanish character, proverbially celebrated for gravity and circumspection, has got a store of gaiety and lightheartedness at bottom, which to a people, if predestined to every sort of misfortune, must be regarded as a bounty of Providence to cheer them in their course. In Carnival time, the most squalid beggars pick up a grotesque head-dress, or some filthy disguise; blacken

their faces with soot, and perfume the streets with their unwholesome odours as they pass along, performing their antics, while songs, and guitars, and uncompassed cries of merriment accompany them. If these produce disgust in the spectators, the objects themselves are wholly insensible of it, being either too drunk or too happy (which amounts nearly to the same thing) to regard any one's feelings but their own. As evening approaches, the motley crowd augments; quadrilles of masqueraders appear in every direction, hurrying to the cheaper points of amusement, all resolved to be as happy, or happier, than their betters. Among the higher classes, every house is converted into a tailor's and dressmaker's shop. Fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and lovers, aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces, tutors and pupils, are all in council assembled. Some cut out paper patterns, unravel silk, shape a hat, match ribands, thread needles, pick up thimbles, sew, talk, scream, and try on their costumes; discuss and settle the balls they are to go to, and the subscriptions to be taken among all, so as to allow a change of scene. Now is the

precious moment for a hitherto neglected suitor to open his purse and prove his attachment, according to the old proverb, that “Obras son amores.” Let him lay at the feet of his “fair tyrant” two, three, or four subscription tickets for different balls; one for Santa Catalina, one for Abrantes, another for St. Bernard’s, or for Solis, or for the Theatre del Principe. She must be the most flinty-hearted of all damsels, or he the most unfortunate of swains, if such unequivocal liberality does not meet its due reward.

The locality of Santa Catalina is superb, and peculiarly well disposed for this species of amusement. A large saloon, supported in the middle by handsome columns, receives the orchestra and dancers; another capacious room, leading off it, accommodates more sedentary amateurs. There is nothing wanting to render this establishment complete; refreshment and supper rooms invite and satisfy the hungry appetite, while the eye is gratified by a profusion of wax-lights, which enliven the moving and picturesque spectacle.

The suppressed scream generally assumed to disguise the voice God has given, acts as a strong

disenchanter of the illusion. I have often regretted the loss of that art possessed by the worthy Bottom in former days, who could teach people to roar you "like a sucking dove;" its recovery would greatly enhance the pleasure of masquerading, for he must be a very decided lover of disguise and intrigue, who is not soon stunned and sickened by the incessant repetition of the silly "Do you know me?" "If you don't, you"—"Ah! mad wag!" followed by two or three shakes of the fan from the fair mask, and her immediate disappearance. A decent mask comes up, takes you familiarly by the arm, peers well into your face, screams out one or two silly phrases, and tattles of any thing and every thing, until the dancing begins. If you are sufficiently *desalmado* not to lead her forth "on light fantastic toe," she will manage to give you a reproach, and the slip, at the same instant, and go in quest of some more active cavalier. Although the Spanish ladies are endowed with very great intelligence and wit, and know every qualification to give zest to intrigue, still, a masquerade at Madrid is but a dull thing after all. Unless one has a direct interest and object in

being there, I know nothing more conducive to melancholy than this eternal moving crowd of masked and screaming beings, many among them forcing flagging spirits into noise and ex-citation.

The splendour of fantastic toilet is carried to a pitch of extravagance infinitely beyond the scanty means of the wearers. There is an emulation not only to go to the balls, but to appear there, and eclipse their neighbours, which often produces unfortunate results. When every thing of value in a house is pledged to indulge this passion, and that without the knowledge of the husband, it is to be feared that a seasonable supply of cash will too frequently purchase that which never ought to be sold. A Spanish woman requires no addition to her attractions from foreign costume, even in Carnival time. She never looks more masqueradish and coquettish than she does in her simple graceful walking dress and fan.*

* The rage for the toilet among the Madrilenians, both male and female, is proverbial. No where does the coat, and not the man, take more marked precedence. The Carnival is an epoch justly dreaded by husbands and

At one o'clock the rooms are crowded. The *Bastonero*,* despite his good lungs, and long gilt wand, has no small difficulty in marshalling the dancers. "The music is excellent; the dancing, in individual cases, equally so. Many an unknown charming little foot enchants the beholder, by its coy and graceful advance and retreat from under an embroidered petticoat; while a slender waist, a full black eye glancing out of the silk *careta*, a small beautifully

fathers. Whether they have the means or not, whether willing or unwilling, the dresses and subscriptions *must* and *will* be got, no matter how; and every other concomitant expense gone into with eagerness, by their spouses and children. The house is often stripped of its most indispensable comforts, in order to feed those wants. The balancing of accounts adds most powerfully to the gloom of Lent. Threats are held out on one side, and good resolutions professed on the other—for the next year. But when the trial comes, things are sure to go on in the old way.

* A secondary master of the ceremonies, or steward. His pole is despotic over the movements of the orchestra. He ordains the quadrille or the waltz at pleasure; and exerts himself, generally in vain, to put some order in the 'sets.'

modelled head moving with a grace exclusively Spanish, a profusion of the finest black tresses, add to the attractions. An inspiring *Mazurka* gives wings to these flying Lilliputian feet. A Grecian nymph may be seen leaning on the arm of a bearded Mussulman, and Chinese matrons trusting themselves to ruthless Tartars, without a sign of dread; jingling pagoda caps, Greek *calottes*; Valencia head-dresses, Indian feathers, *Caciques* and *Magnificos*. All the motley groups are turning and whirling in a dizzy confusion; couples mingle, and meet shock together. There is no time for excuses; on they whirl in wilder circles, until the music bids them stop.

The niches of the pillars, and every corner secure from disturbance, are occupied by knots of elderly amateurs, who never miss a ball; who come among the first, and go away the last. They station themselves thus favourably to feed with eager eye, helped by glasses, single or double, on every motion of a favourite mask, whom their imaginations will have endowed with a face as fair as her form is supple and fascinating.

On a late occasion, I too had noticed, and followed all through the intricacies of a *galopade*, a pair of dazzling little feet, both for their beauty and spangled shoes, belonging to as tempting a figure as may belong to woman. As I looked, long forgotten sensations stole apace upon me. Dancing I had forsaken for many years; I had vowed never again to move to "any measure." It is almost needless to say, that I changed my mind and forgot the vow. But my "fair unknown" was engaged for several successive dances, and I was obliged to be contented with her promise to be my partner in a later waltz. From an indifferent and listless observer of what was going on, careless whether the various dances had their regular and established routine or not, I became an attentive student of the regulations of the balls. I was not long before I satisfied myself that the waltz had been deprived of its rightful time, and immediately stalked over to the *bastonero*, upbraiding him with so revolting a partiality in favour of *rigo-dones* and *galopas*, and saying some home things on the duties of men in public stations:

the result was a promise from him, that the waltz should be speedily announced. This settled, I returned to feast my eyes on the fair form of my unknown charmer. To my oft-renewed intreaties, for a glimpse under the *careta* of "paradise," for her face could not but be lovely, she was inexorable. "You little know what you ask," was her reply; "you will see my face but too soon."—"Modest as lovely! She is an angel," said I to myself. "I will unmask, but not till late; you will then be convinced of your mistake." The music ceased. Relying upon the good faith of the *bastonero*, I approached the beauteous mask, and seizing her not unwilling hand, was counting the moments until I should be permitted to encircle that fairy waist. The first notes of the orchestra, and the rush of the quadrillers to their posts (proving the little reliance to be placed on *bastoneros* promises), and a gentle courtesy from the lady as she joined another cavalier, less fastidious in his choice of dames, roused in me a feeling of disappointment such as may be conceived. It was a moment to have converted the *bastonero's*

gilt wand of office into an instrument of punishment for his faithlessness. My wrath was only appeased by his apologies for his weak memory, and a renewed promise that I should soon be gratified. In the interval, I kept on conversing with the *incognita*. She had a sweetened subdued tone of voice, an excellent thing in woman. “She did not live in the more busy part of the town, but at a considerable distance—walked seldom the Prado—lived very much at home,—went regularly to church,—rarely any where else. Her work and books occupied her time.” All these were very interesting circumstances, and in a Spanish beauty too !

The *quadrille* was over.—The *bastonero* this time was to be trusted. I hastened to the side of my fairy queen ; where was she ? Overcome by the heat, she had unmasked, and happily did not perceive my approach. What do I see ?—The feet—the dress—the form of head are the same ; eyes are good, but worn ;—but that hideous nose ; those teeth of ominous hue, protruding from her upper lip ;—those surely can never belong to the fair *incognita* ? Alas !

yes. Instantly profiting by an intervening group, I sought my way out as well as my mortification would permit. The *bastonero*, seeing me approach, and thinking I was again about to reprove his remissness, instantly gave the signal with his wand, and the waltz of *Robin des bois* at once struck up. The sound quickened my pace. I ventured to steal a parting look at my Dulcinea ; she was still looking round in the attitude of expectation. I got to the safe side of one of the large columns, and keeping in a right line with it, rushed into the street, with a firm resolve never to allow my imagination again to get the better of me, as it had done on this occasion.

The palace of the “Duke of Abrantes” is not so well adapted for public reception as the Santa Atalmo ; but fashion has now stamped it as the most aristocratic rendezvous of masks in the capital ; * yet, even there, the same door is

* The Infanta Doña Luisa Carlista has endeavoured, as much as in her lies, to break through the monstrous etiquette formerly imposed on the members of the royal family.

open to promiscuous interviews as in all other Spanish circles ; and the same little family accidents occur as they do elsewhere. While mothers and *chaperones*, overcome by the heat, and tired of wandering from room to room, seek out some snug corner to indulge in a doze, in the confidence of their repose being watched by niece or daughter, or *protégée*, it often happens that some handsome, manly, or well-turned *majo*, who had been lying in wait for the auspicious moment, contrives to spirit them away, in order to pour into their willing ears discourse more seducing than music or the dance. Nay, when there is an immense crowd, and the impossibility

She frequents the theatres and public amusements; and occasionally opens her magnificent suite of rooms in the palace to a select number of the nobility. Her Royal Highness gave four masked balls two years ago, which might rival those of any court; above all, being graced, as they were, by the enlivening presence of a young and lovely Queen. The Infanta is a princess of great character and firmness of purpose. The mysterious occurrences of La Granja, in 1832, give proof of both qualities in an eminent degree.

of at once discovering the absence of one member of “the party,” is considered, need it be matter of wonder if a couple take leave of the ball-room altogether, and re-appear with many a fair excuse, that, despairing to find the family until the company thinned, they had ventured upon another *rigodon*, &c. ?

Although the consequences of masked balls are such as should make them feared and detested by husbands and fathers, they are, nevertheless, the first to figure in them the following season, flattering themselves that increased vigilance will prevent mischief, and from the persuasion that they give the *muchachas* an opportunity of “showing off,” and a chance of thereby securing a husband ; and, above all, that they tend to keep their wives in good humour.

In entertainments of this kind, which, from various causes, might be productive of great disorders, no symptoms of irritation or violence are ever to be observed. The Spanish public are, in this respect, the most orderly in the world, and the most courteous in their bearing to each other. The *petites maîtresses* go home to sleep

until three the next day ; drive to the Prado, and tell all their friends how delightful every thing was, especially when the ball was one at which they know their auditors had not been present. People are so fond of mortifying one another in this world !

The longanimity of the elderly gentlemen already mentioned, is remarkable ; they come at twelve, and do not leave while there is a mask in the saloon. This life they lead during the whole Carnival; nor does their vigour fail them during Lent. Zealous and never-failing frequenters of sermons, processions, funerals with music, wherever the rustle of a petticoat is heard, a re-union of females to be found, there are they also, like the elders on the watch for “ the chaste Susannah ;” and as the descent becomes more rapid towards the grave, they seize the bells and staff of folly to stay their progress.

But the candles are burnt to their sockets ; even Don Benito, this most persevering of these “ elders,” is already past the threshold. The sentry eyes so tardy a loiterer with suspicion ;

and, as one's own bed is generally preferable to the softest plank in a guard-room, I shall take my leave of the deserted saloon of Santa Catalina, put my mask in my pocket, and bid adieu, for this year at least, to Masked Balls.

CHAPTER XV.

Bull-fights.

IT would not be a very easy matter to ascertain the precise date of the introduction of this amusement into Spain, or whether the honour of its invention belongs exclusively to the Spanish nation; the latter version seems the most probable. “*Esta en la massa de la sangre,*” (it is in their blood), as they say themselves, to be fond of, or rather mad after, bull-baits of all descriptions. In the fair kingdom of Andalusia, any child of six years old, who had not already a very fair idea of the *juego de capa* (the man-

agement of the mantle), to elude and divert the bull's attention, as well as correct notions touching the how and where the blade of the *matador* should enter the animal, would be looked upon as a sorry bantering, and of no promise. Even the little girls practise with their shawls, or any other *trapo* they can lay hold of. One of the children's favourite games, is bull-baiting one another. One plays the bull, while the others represent the usual train of *banderilleros*, *chulos*, and *picadores*. He is hunted, baffled with the mantle, and dies with all the honours and dust of the arena.

Argote de Molina, in his book of *Monteria of King Alonso XI.*, speaks of bull-fighting even at that early period, as a diversion of great antiquity. He says,

“ To bait and hunt bulls in the lists, is the custom of Spain from the most remote periods; and there are ancient institutions enacted by the vows of cities, of feasts offered for victories gained against infidels on certain days, marked out. It is the most gentle pastime known in Spain; so much so, that without it none is con-

sidered of enjoyment, on account of the variety of casualties which it brings in its train ;—noble cavaliers descending with stout lances and spirited horses to fight the bull, in the presence of the court, many great dames, and other personages.”

Argote would, no doubt, be highly gratified, were he to return to earth, to see the fidelity and attachment with which his countrymen still uphold this ancient tradition and gentle pastime of their ancestors. Not very many years ago, the Spanish grandees used to pride themselves fully as much on their boldness and dexterity in wielding the *pica** of a *torero*, as on their blue

* The *pica*, or lance of the *picador*, consists of a long tough ashen pole, armed at one end with a quadrangular spike, projecting about two inches from the socket, which is protected and secured with closely tied string. The wound inflicted by this weapon is not very severe, although quite sufficient to infuriate the bull. The rules of the “sport” set limits to its use. The wound in the neck and shoulders are considered legitimate and fair defence. But any infliction further “aft,” is received with a roar of indignation, A Madrid bull-audience are very sensitive in their pleasures, as becomes such refined judges.

blood and armorial bearings. Horses of the greatest price and beauty figured in the arena. It was even matter of boast with those cavaliers, to recount after the onset : I lost my bay, or black, or grey ; he was worth 20,000 reals (200*l.*), but the fight was worth a “ Peru.” I have more, and as good, horses in my stables to follow the same fate.*

* Custom and etiquette command the appearance of *hidalgos* in the *Funciones Reales*, when the monarch presides. A bull-fight of this description took place on the proclamation of the Infanta Isabel, as Princess of Asturias, and heiress to the throne. Volunteers were not wanting on the occasion. One of the number already named and chosen, quailed on the eve of the fight, and tried to be excused. But the king would not hear of any change : the recreant knight was obliged to make good his challenge, and was severely hurt on the first onset. The company of Royal Halberdiers also form in the lists immediately beneath the royal box, armed with long spears, something in the style of the Macedonian phalanx. The bull, attracted by the novelty of so many unusual visitors, generally pays them his first attentions. But received on a deepening hedge of spears, his efforts are too painful and bloody to induce a repetition. The pageantry and pomp of

If the progress of civilization, or prudential and personal considerations, have calmed this adventurous ardour in the privileged class, it is certain that, in Andalusia, the sons of the first nobility still look upon bull-fighting as the noblest calling of man; never hesitating to expose their persons and finest steeds to the horns of their formidable antagonist. The immense herds of horned cattle bred in the plains of the South, help, of course, to diffuse this passion. The young men of the country usually devote their holidays and leisure time to excursions on horseback to the various *cortejos*,* where they single out the wildest bulls, and bait them in the field, or within the court-yard. The cowherds,—

a royal bull-fight may be more attractive as a picture. But for “sport,” they do not come up to the ordinary exhibitions in the *Plaza*.

* *Cortejo*—a large country establishment and farm-house. In Andalusia, they are extensive and solidly built, generally containing a good residence for the proprietor, and all the necessary out-offices, surrounded by a high wall, resembling the Eastern style of architecture for the same purposes.

men who pass their lives on horseback, pike in hand, governing an unruly population — give “dias de gloria,” (days of glory) to their country, from this nursery of great men, which has sent forth Montes, Jorá, Sevilla, Pepe Botella, and other heroes of the Plaza of Madrid, who fill the world at large with their renown.*

* The intrepidity, force, and agility of these men, and of their comrades in general, are admirable. Their coolness is not less remarkable. They stand between two fires. The sarcasms, violent and bitter, and the plaudits of the crowd. A wish to avoid the first, and to merit the latter, prompts them to acts of the greatest rashness. Montes, notorious for the graceful agility of his person, and endowed with a rare presence of mind, afforded a treat to the spectators every time of his appearance. He possesses so perfect a knowledge of the mode of baffling the bull with the red flag, that he allows the animal to come close upon him, and, when to all appearance he is lost, a sharp turn on either side, or a light spring over his horns sets him free again, amid the shouts of his admirers. In his last exhibition, his usual good fortune failed him; he was caught upon the bull's horns, and so dangerously hurt, that it is very doubtful whether he will ever be able to resume his career. The enthusiasm inspired by this favourite, is carried to an amusing pitch of extravagance. “What is Napoleon?”

His late Majesty, of glorious memory, *Que en paz descoure!* (may he rest in peace!) or, to use
exclaimed, on one occasion, one of his admirers, “*Un majadero*, (a plague). *No hay mas que un Montes en el mundo.*
(There is but one Montes in the world !)

There is a story told of an instance of “dark vengeance,” meditated by a young Andalusian against his former bosom friend, which might find a place here as belonging to the subject. Two sworn inseparable friends, Manuel and Vicente, went together, as on all former occasions, to enjoy bull-baiting at the *cortejo* of a relation. In the course of the sport, some dispute took place as to which of the two had done best, during which blows were exchanged, the advantage remaining on the side of Manuel. They were apparently reconciled, and Vicente received the embrace and regrets of his friend with a good grace, but swore in his heart to be revenged. Some days afterwards, on Vicente’s invitation, Manuel accompanied him to the *cortejo* of his uncle, to see a fine herd of young bulls, just turned in from the summer pastures. They dined together, and inspected the stables and animals. “You must come with me,” said Vicente, “to a small lock-up, where there is a beautiful bull kept for sale, which I wish to show you. He is the most furious—the whole *vega*, the cowherds themselves are afraid of him.” The door of the lock-up was opened with caution, the low-arched vault was almost dark. “You can advance somewhat nearer without danger,” said

the more courtly term, *Que en la gloria este!* (may he be in glory !) * Don Fernando, seventh of

Vicente. Manuel did so; but the moment his body was clear of the door, the traitor, who was behind him, closed it violently, turning the key outside, and flinging it to a distance, to prevent a prompt discovery of his crime. Manuel had but little time to adopt a resolution. The bull, alarmed at the noise, sprang upon his legs, pawed the ground, and fixed his two glaring balls upon his victim, who had not even his cloak, to give him a chance of baffling the animal and gaining a respite. The roof was supported by a heavy stone pillar. The bull was already drawing himself together for his rush; Manuel places his back against the pillar, shouts defiance, and provokes his enemy with feet and hands. The charge is made—the quick eye of the Andalusian watched the favourable moment; he slipped aside from the pillar as the horns grazed his person, and saw the bull fall dead at his feet, his brains beat out by the shock against the column. But a sterner reckoning was now to be settled. Manuel's cries brought assistance and liberation; the story divulged itself. Vicente had gone home. Manuel mounted his horse, loaded his *trabujo*, and rode hard to overtake his intended assassin. It was not long before he discerned him afar off. "Vicente," he shouted, "wait: I owe you 'la vuelta' (the turn)." Vicente, conscious his life was at stake, spurred his horse; his pursuer being better mounted,

* See page 302.

the name, was a great admirer and protector of the noble science of *tauromachia*. The bluff countenances, enormous whiskers, athletic forms, and winning manners, of the masters in this profession, won his royal heart. He determined on leaving a lasting memorial of his reign, and of his zeal for the progress of civilization, by the foundation of a college, for the instruction and fitting education of young aspirants to the

gained fast upon him. Vicente screamed for mercy; but a shot was heard immediately afterwards, which did its bidding. Vicente was buried privately without enquiry, for his family dreaded the publicity of his treachery. Manuel left his home, and went to sea, some said to America. His flight was followed by his friends, for they all looked upon his revenge as an act of justified homicide.

* A royal decree came out shortly after King Ferdinand's demise, which caused some merriment, from a mistake (perhaps a voluntary one) in the tense of the verb, *Estar*, in allusion to the king, the phrase ran—*Que en la gloria esta*, (who is in glory), deciding roundly upon what is generally left to a modest subjunctive instead of *Que en la gloria este*, (may he be in glory). The recollections of all classes of his subjects rendered this positive assertion still more piquante.

honours of the *pica*. The monarch's popularity in Andalusia, and generally among the unreflecting and ignorant classes in Spain, which formed, unfortunately, the immense majority of his subjects, was greatly augmented by the apropos of this measure. “Here is a king who provides for the amusement of his vassals—may he live a thousand years! and may there never come a worse!” The *Torero* placed at the head of this establishment, with a salary of 24,000 reals a year, may be supposed to have valued highly the honour conferred upon him; and doubtless, had any dispute for precedence arisen from a fortuitous meeting with the most enlightened professors of Valladolid, Granada, or Salamanca, the man of dance and *moño*,* could have it decided in his favour.†

* The *moño*, is the clump of hair in guise of a pigtail, which is a necessary part of the Andalusian costume, though usually worn false. When appertaining to the head, its matted mass requires a great deal more care than the wearers are inclined to bestow, to keep it free from a numerous living population.

† The Queen's government has unfortunately overturned this national monument; dedicating its *endowments* to the

Whenever any great public rejoicing is ordered (such seldom occurs spontaneously in any country), the smallest village endeavours to have a *nobilis*, if its funds or situation do not allow a bull and *picadores*. Jovellanos's bitter ejaculation, PAN Y TOROS! Ay! “give them BREAD AND BULLS,” that is all they want—all they are fit for—must be in every one's memory. I am afraid that no very remarkable change has since taken place in public opinion in this respect. The best wine, *magras* (fried ham and eggs), *bacallado frito* (fried ling), *huebos estrellados* (fried eggs), or *escabeche* (pickled meat),* and *pan de flor* (bread of the first quality)—bowls, nine pins,

education of the poor. Ah! esos cambios! esos cambios! que fatales son! (Those changes! Those changes! How fatal they are!) is echoed in every key, in proportion to the steady march of the actual more enlightened administration to better things and measures.

* All these are favourite morsels with Spaniards, and by no means despicable any where. The quantity of ling consumed in Spain and Portugal is incredible; it forms a very essential portion of the food of the population. The annual imports of it are estimated at nearly five millions of dollars.

foot-ball, wrestling, even as Tobias with the Angel, shooting at a mark;—none of all these are either palatable or pleasing, if unaccompanied with *toros!* *Toros nos morimos por los toros.* (We are dying for the bulls!)

If there be any truth in what was said of old, respecting the mobility of the French character, viz., that the sound of a fiddle was capable of dispelling all their griefs, it may be asserted with even greater truth, that the *Aviso al Publico*, (advertisement) announcing that “the Queen, our mistress, whom God preserve! has been graciously pleased to concede a bull-fight in the morning and evening, to the loyal inhabitants of the very noble and heroic city of Madrid,” is a universal and infallible panacea for all the cares and chagrins to be found within the fourteen *barrios* of the capital, and more especially for those weighing upon the lower classes of the population. Work may be scarce, employment of every sort scantily remunerated, but the dollar for the bull-fight, and accompanying expenses must be found, or borrowed, or earned, or stolen. To allow a Monday to pass without

seeing the “sport,” is too much self-denial for a Madrilenian of true game. The females of this class, the *manolas*, have their full share of such enthusiasm. The most irresistible of all seductions for them, is the promise of a ticket for the *plaza*, no matter whether sheltered from the sun or not.* This is the lover’s sure bait, not less so of the alarmed husband, wherewith to smooth the ruffled temper of his hardy and vigorous helpmate. The *puchero*, the children, trade or work, may suffer as they may during the other six days of the week, but it is quite impossible not to go and see Montes, *ese indino tan asombroso*,† (that unworthy wonder-worker), and other worthies, “not unknown to fame.”

* Besides the boxes, which cost more or less according to the attendance, there are places protected from the intolerable heat of the sun, costing ten reals a-piece. Others, not having this advantage, from six to eight reals. In the pit or lower amphitheatre, exposed to the changes of the atmosphere, the price of each seat is a *peseta*.

† A pet phrase of the lower classes; *indino* in a sense opposite to its usual meaning.

On the day of the *corrida*, the whole population of Madrid is in motion ; those who do not attend themselves, go to look at those who do. Every street in the direction of the descent of the Alcalà is thronged with human beings and joyful faces, prodigal of confusion of speech and gesticulation ; some on horseback, some on foot, some in carriages. Tardy *tios* from the country, impressing cordially both heels into the sides of their *boricos*, and making vain efforts to prod them into a shuffling canter, for fear of being too late ; hard knocks and hard words are levelled at their long hanging ears, but they don't mind that, and cleave the crowd in their usual quiet amble.

The view, looking up towards the gate of Alcalà, is now most animated and exhilarating. The *calessins* are flying in all directions with their joyous freights ; the gay *panache*, and ribbons shading the horse's head, float merrily in the breeze ; —light-footed zagals, holding the animal close by the head, direct him at full speed down the Calle Alcalà, and up the *paseo* of the *Glorista*, towards the *Plaza de Toros*,

outside the city gate. Nor is the *clami calessin** the only vehicle rolling that way; *coupés*, carriages, *tartanas*, all the two and four-wheeled combinations of Madrid ingenuity, are put in requisition with full cargoes.

But the shining broad faces, and bold dark eyes of the *manolas*, form the leading attraction of the scene. Some of these, endowed with thirst and foresight, bear a fair-sized bottle with a steady hand, despite the marvellous jolting of the calessin; and hold on with the other by the sash of their male companion, who has himself fast hold of the pannier; biscuits and oranges tied in a handkerchief, some slices of ham also jammed in between, and a *panecilio* (a split loaf), flank the bottle. The agonized muzzle of a cur or poodle-dog, poked out between their legs, proves, by sundry distor-

* The commodities of the *calessin* have been described elsewhere. But amateurs should be aware that the "real thing" to go to the bull-fights in, is a *calessin* with its *zagal* and beribboned steed. It is as necessary to be in good keeping here, as, in old times, in England, it was the fashion to trot down to a "set-to" in a buggy.

tions and grimaces, the extreme difficulty he experiences in maintaining his place.

Thus prepared for three hours of rage and vociferation, they hasten up the hill, until the denseness of the crowd, pouring through the archways, bring them to a walk, to their great regret, and the poodle's complete satisfaction.

The scene presented in the space between the gate of Alcalà, and the rising of the same street, is a subject well worthy of the pencil of an able artist, if, indeed, so many varied masses could be condensed into one picture. Groups of lounging soldiers of the home-guards, are scattered before their barracks ; and, in the shade of the avenue, some observing with intense interest the wayward doings, and horsemanship of a Savoyard's monkies, and the patience of the dog under his mercurial cavaliers. The singing of a vagrant family to the thrumming of a couple of guitars : water drinkers waiting for their turn around the fountain of Cybele ; more genuine topers choking up the taverns behind, and near the barracks of the provincial guard, a knot of quiet *boricos*, indispensable figures in all Spanish places of

resort, waiting patiently the return of their owners.

“A return *calessin*! Do you want a *calessin*, my master? There is one which will take you safely and swiftly, quicker than a flash of lightning.”—“*Agua, agua!* *quien lo bebe*—(Water! water! who drinks it?) *Ay! que fresco! que rico!*”—(Ah! how fresh! how rich!) The work of many feet, and the hoarse hum of many voices, lend to this spot a life and bustle to which it has no pretension during the other days of the week.

The stately porches of the gate of Alcala are gained at length. The crowd streams onward to the *Coliseum*. The cries of the sentry to keep the line, and those, more inviting, of *Escabeche de Vesugo!*—(Pickled Vesugs.) “Ah, how good! and tender as a chicken!” strike your ear.

When a stranger, for the first time, enters this fine imposing circus, disposed in amphitheatre, crowded with twenty thousand spectators, of different manners, costumes, and character, and hears the deafening ebullitions of their gaiety, the shouts of mutual recognition ex-

changed between all parts of the assembly, it is impossible for him not to feel a quickening of the blood towards his heart, in a degree which he has never before experienced ; for the first view of a full “ Plaza de Toros” in Madrid, must be looked upon as unique of its kind. In the gaily adorned boxes, galleries, and pit, are to be seen every gradation of toilet, from the rich aristocratic mantilla, or Gallic bonnet of the ladies of rank, whose enjoyment of the sport is betrayed by gentle undulation of their embroidered cambric handkerchiefs, in honour and encouragement of the bold *picador*, or cool *matador*, to the black glossy hair of the young *manola*, a silver gilt bodkin ornamenting her head, a well-formed bust carelessly concealed by a showy kerchief, the silk mantilla bound with black velvet, thrown backward as a scarf upon her shoulders and neck, encircled with a coral-bead-chain, and large gold ear-rings, hanging to the shoulder,—posture erect, and arms a-kimbo. In her, behold the admiration of “ *manolos*,” the arbitress of the plaudits or hisses to be distributed to the performers below.

Soldiers, citizens, and provincials, from all

parts of Spain, fill the lower benches, and make up in noise, what they want in elevation. The church, also, sends its representatives. Many a full-fed dean and friar places himself in a *corrida de toros*—always, however, with proper precautions, such as they are wont to use when enjoying, from the corner of their eye, the lavish display of female attractions in the seats beneath them.

The appointed hour arrived, a piquet of cavalry enters the circus, and marches round to the sound of trumpets, accompanied by four *Alguacils de corte*, dressed in the ancient Spanish fashion, viz., broad-brimmed hat, turned up on one side with red and white plumes, short black mantle, close-fitting vest, with the corner of a white handkerchief peeping out from each pocket. The circuit made, the troops retire; the *alguacils* rein up their steeds in front of the royal box, salute with hat and plumes and a slender wand, the badge of their office, and go each their way, to give orders for the commencement of the fight.*

* One gallops to apprise the *picadores* that they may

The *picadores** appear within the barricade, a warning flourish of trumpets clears the inside gallery of superfluous loiterers. The *chulos* and

enter the lists; another gives orders for the bull to be let loose. This done, they retire through the posterns, and are no more seen, unless a tumult or extraordinary event requires their re-appearance. They are in attendance until the fight is over.

* *Picadores*—those who attack the bull on horseback;—the necessary assistants are, four *banderilleros*, so called from the sharp-pointed goads, in the shape of arrows, with coloured paper streamers, which they plunge with great address into the bull's neck and shoulders, to create his rage; eight *chulos*, men with various coloured cotton cloaks wherewith to draw off the bull's attention from an endangered companion. Each *picador* and *matador* has generally two *chulos* especially allotted to his protection. The *matador* is the head performer, and directs their movements; once the signal is given for the bull to die. There is another *attaché*, who attends with a short poignard to dispatch a cowardly bull, when the *media luna* (a long pole with a sharp knife in the shape of a crescent, fixed to it), has already disabled him by cutting his hamstrings. This operation, besides its revolting character, is a great reflection on the *savoir faire* of the *matador*, who ought never to stand in need of such extraneous aid to dispatch his bull.

banderilleros step lightly into the arena, in their gaudy bespangled dresses. Shouts and vociferations, and sounds of expectation rend the Coliseum. Another flourish.—Each man is at his post; the bolts of the bull-stall are withdrawn.* The gate is pulled aside, the barrier thrown open.—*El toro! El toro!*—(The bull, the bull!) A single bound has brought him to the lists!

That noisy crowd is now a silent mass; the presence of the lordly animal, as of some fearless knight in ancient tournament, engrosses the sole attention. A short wild stare of surprise and anger,—another to select his victim, and a headlong rush against the nearest horseman,

* The bull destined to be baited is confined in a stall immediately opposite the royal box, that the royal family may see, to advantage, his first entrance, which is one of the most interesting parts of the fight. A small trap-door, communicating with the stall from the terrace of the orchestra, enables a man, appointed for the purpose, to give a severe goad in the loins of the bull with a long steel-pointed pole, and thereby aggravate his fury. This is done immediately before the last bull falls between him and his enemies.

begin the combat.* The *picador*, his lance in rest, awaits the onset, gives his adversary the go-by, and, by address and great strength of arm, saves his horse from a gore. Shouts of applause : Bravo, bravo! go it! *a el!* *a el!* shrieks, whistles, catcalls, every sort and manner of ejaculation rouse his spirits. Has he failed ? Groans, hisses, orange-peel, insults, of the most coarse nature, are showered upon him. Should the furious animal succeed in his charge, overturn horse and rider, and put the *picador's* life in danger, the shining band of *chulos* comes to his rescue ; they fling their party-coloured mantles before the bull's eyes, and always succeed in drawing him off from his victim. The onsets are repeated, until successive wounds from the lance, and loss of blood, render his bullship more circumspect. He now turns his attention to the footmen—that band of light-limbed, well-

* If a bull is true game, he attacks at once. When he bellows, paws the ground, and amuses himself pursuing the fleeting forms of the *chulos*, it is a bad sign. A bull of this undecided character gets but a short respite. People pay to see blood flow, and blood they must have.

made tormentors, gaily decked out in pink, and blue, and yellow, and white, and gold, and silver, with sharp-pointed shoes, and white silk stockings. They flit before him like sunny vapours ; female screams denote time for their lives ! they are entangled on the bull's horns ! Illusion ! an aerial spring—a bird-like agility floats them across the barrier, leaving their gay mantles toying in the air, or decorating the horns of their adversary, instead of their own persons. This Indian-rubber race, with their tinsel and trappings, can only be compared to large blue-bottle flies, sporting in the sun, so nimbly do they cleave the air on an emergency !* When the bull is somewhat exhausted, a trumpet note is the signal for the *banderilleros* to fasten their goads in his neck and shoulders. They do

* The impetus of the bull's charge is sometimes so great as to take him over the outer barrier. This accident is provided against, by the vacant space left between the two barriers, to which he must confine himself. The barriers are opened on his passage, and he is again forced to take the field. Sometimes the jaded animal tries a last leap, to save himself from his tormentors.

it at the top of their speed, with a cruel grace and promptitude. Bellowings of rage and pain, and some wavering onsets, denote that his hour is come.—Another flourish of trumpets is the signal for the *matador* to come forward and do his office. He takes a red mantle, or piece of cloth attached to a short handle, which enables him to manage it with ease, and hide his long *Toledo* blade at the same time.* Stepping in front of the royal box,

* This fold of red cloth is employed to attract the bull towards the *matador*, scarlet being a colour peculiarly obnoxious to bulls and turkey cocks. It also affords some facility to the *matador*, in parrying the bull's attacks, until the latter presents his neck in a favourable posture for the fatal stroke. The best *matador* cannot succeed in doing this with some bulls; an hour will often pass in vain attempts. Their patience gets exhausted, and the *media luna* is called for.

The *matador* is liberally paid; he receives 3000 reals, at least (30*l.*), every bull-fight. Should there be two baitings, morning and evening, the obligation of the two “*espadas*” is to kill the twelve bulls between them. The *picadores* are paid from 1800 to 2000 reals each (from 15*l.* to 20*l.*)—the *chulos* much lower, yet sufficient to induce them to follow so hazardous a career.

and kneeling on one knee, he doffs his *cachucha* (cap), asks permission to do his office, draws his arm across his breast quickly, to the right and left, and throws his cap on the ground as a pledge to be redeemed. But his task is a trying one. As every Spaniard fond of bull-fights (and who is not ?) has his own particular notions of killing a bull, as in all countries people have of stirring a fire, each, of course, is dissatisfied with every other process but his own, and uses freely his privilege of speech on such occasions.

“ Holla ! I see you are afraid ? glad of it, out upon you.—See how pale he is getting? go a little farther from him, do pray. Go to Coromandel, *there* you will be safe. Fuera ! out with him. Vaya ! what a butcher’s blow ! you should take the hatchet instead of the ‘*espada*.’ Ah ! another miss ! never mind, if he kills you, I am here ! Ah ! Out ! you clown ! go to bed ! to jail with this *picaro*.—The *media luna*, a—a—a!! Work, you lazy dog ! ay ! *que salado* ! Bien ! Bien ! Bravo ! what of that little horning ! it was only a *sustillo*, a little fright.”

Should he plunge the well-tempered steel

where the neck and shoulders meet, the bull staggers, drops, and expires! The most extravagant demonstrations of joy hail the feat. The successful *matador* returns before the royal box, again kneels to the ground, and salutes as having redeemed his pledge.

The bull is no sooner dead, than a trumpet signal introduces three powerful and richly caparisoned mules to the arena. Their traces are hooked to a cross-bar already attached to his feet, and he is borne off at full gallop. The barriers again close, and the lists are ready for another combat.*

* The whole interest of the fight centers in the chance of a good bull; if the contrary happens, nothing can be more tiresome or monotonous. Sometimes *banderilleros*, with fireworks, are applied to rouse a phlegmatic bull. Their explosion broils and maddens him, but seldom effects the object of rendering him more enterprising. At others, large Majorca mastiffs are let loose upon him; his late majesty used to give the signal for them, by raising his hand to the royal ear! and half a dozen dogs immediately rushed upon the arena. The spectacle of the wounded and lacerated horses, ridden with their entrails trailing on the ground, and trod to

The fair sex, who reign more despotically over men and manners than we care to confess, can alone bring about a revolution in a long-rooted national custom. No *caballero* in Spain but throws himself “at his mistress’ feet” several times a-day, and, on every possible occasion, pays ample public homage to the sway and charms of the sex. Why, in return, should they not exert themselves, and try to reclaim their slaves from this savage passion, by making a point of absenting themselves from all such diversions, and thus stigmatising them as un-

pieces by the unfortunate animal’s hoofs, is too horrible to be compensated by any other excitement this savage sport may be supposed to afford. The members of the diplomatic corps are among the keenest amateurs in the whole Plaza, which makes the Spaniard say, with good reason,—“Strangers condemn loudly our barbarian bull-fights; but they seem very glad indeed to attend them.

When the spectators are dissatisfied with an “*espada*,” or any other occurrence of the *Corrida*, they draw forth their flint and steel, and, as they are all smokers, and provided with these articles, they produce a very reasonable galaxy of sparks. When this takes place at dusk, it has a singular and pleasing effect, resembling fire-flies in a forest.

worthy of their presence? This is not to be looked for in the lower classes, incapable of appreciating any thing but mere animal enjoyment;—from their superiors, something better might be expected. Why should such velvet cheeks be suffused with pleasure, at the writhings of tortured animals and the perils of brutal gladiators? Such beauteous eyes witnesses of so gory a scene! Notwithstanding the spirit of independence vaunted by the men of our century, and their professed non-subjection to petticoat influence, few would venture to encourage, by their presence or their purses, such sanguinary sports, were their good or bad reception in female society made dependent on their conduct.

That some diminution has taken place in the partiality of ladies for bull-fights, cannot be denied; but it is, by no means, such as to promise an entire cessation of their presence and countenance. We still observe many dusty mantillas and flushed cheeks, descending on foot, or in carriages, from the “slaughter-house.” If we look closely, we shall decipher coronets and armo-

rials on the panels of their equipages,—cocked hats and falling plumes, green coats, and gaudy sabres hanging on their chassaeurs!—all signs and indications of rank and fortune.—Would that we could add, of refinement, of sensibility, of gentleness, of education, of humanity also !

CHAPTER XVI.

El Museo del Prado.

(The National Gallery of Spain.)

THE sight of this splendid monument, erected in honour of the fine arts, in a country where they have long ceased to flourish, must warm the heart of every genuine artist as well as of every true lover of art, and give hopes, that, from such a cradle may yet spring worthy successors of Murillo, Ribera, Coello, Velasquez, &c., whose works, collected within its walls, present a combination of talent, of simplicity, and force of execution, not to be found in any other school.

The treasures contained in the Museum are great indeed, and of the most varied description, and the building itself is sumptuous, and of an elevated order of architecture. The *chefs d'œuvre* of the Flemish, Italian, and Spanish ancient and modern schools, are judiciously distributed into distinct halls. But it would seem as if the architect had, in his disposal of light in the two wings looking towards the Prado, studied only the external beauty of the edifice. The cross-light and consequent false reflection, is very striking in these rooms; it is a defect which no actual means can remedy. Some pictures must be condemned to neglect, or seen only by halves, a choice of the least remarkable for such situations, is the only palliative now possible.*

* The most liberal act of the late monarch's reign was, undoubtedly, the donation of the finest pictures of the different royal residences, to furnish the saloon of this magnificent edifice. It is a sad and melancholy reflection, that all those jewels of arts, are subjected to the Vandal hands and caprice of a commission of artists and "restorers," (destroyers) who are at liberty to take down any picture, and

As it is hardly to be supposed that so glaring a fault should have escaped the notice of the professional men employed in the hanging and arrangement of the pictures, they deserve great credit for the generous hospitality shown to the works of the Italian masters, by placing them in the middle saloon and adjoining rooms, the only ones that receive their light from above, and where the pictures are placed in a fitting

submit it to the restorative process whenever they deem necessary. They come back with the usual marks of well-being and conservation, exhibited by other invalids on clearing an hospital. As this is a commission *ad hoc*, and its members are allowed a salary proportioned to their "labours" so long as such are necessary, it is chimerical to suppose, that their care will ever be superfluous. In the course of a certain time, no picture can hope to escape their infliction, and when all are besmeared and ruined, another round of professional visitation will take place. The knowledge of these *restorers* is on a par with their taste and professional merits, all tending to the *bathos* "immeasurable" profound. A picture removed from its niche, and a ticket substituted, "*in process of restoration*," remind me of a friend gone to his long account,-- thanks to the attentions of the faculty!

and advantageous point of view. There may be also some coquetry in this arrangement, a sort of gauntlet thrown down to visitors, there to decide whether, in spite of all local disadvantages, the Spanish pencil does not produce an illusion, and shed a halo of light and genius around, that attract the enraptured gaze of all who have eyes to see, and a soul to feel, a triumph unattainable by the more classic embodying of Italian inspirations. The liquid touch and free design of the great luminaries of the legitimate Spanish school (Ribera must be excluded), form a new and delicious field of enjoyment to the artist, sated with the correct design and graceful grouping of the Italian masters. Their too great uniformity of colouring, or better to describe it, their inordinate respect for the *antique*, and for the great artists, their predecessors and models—a dread of the well-schooled, and erudite criticism of their acute and susceptible countrymen, and moulded by their classic recollections, and contemplation of the spoils and remnants of the golden and heroic ages of known intellect, fettered the aspirations

of genius towards originality, and scared the poetic shadows of warm youth from realization.*

Nature, in all her purity and simplicity, invited Spanish homage, and her call was fondly answered. But Murillo, alone, of all his countrymen, warmed this feeling into passion. Bursting those earthly trammels, which chain down all but the few chosen spirits, he roved far away among fields of light, and forms of immortal

* Italians come into the world singers, and critics on the fine arts. They are exclusive admirers and abettors of the “antique” in sculpture, and admit no test of excellence in a modern painter, but the degree of his approach to the manner of the great masters—of Raffaël, of Correggio, of Guido, of Titian—should he venture to break from his leading strings, and seek to form a style of his own, he must expect to be overwhelmed by the weight of bitter and contemptuous criticism. Bartolini, the most original, perhaps, the first sculptor of modern times, not even excepting Canova, was long kept under a cloud by the Aristarchuses of Italy; until, at length, foreign encouragement and conviction put him in his right place. The ‘Bacchante’ of Bartolini (now, I believe, in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire) is one of the most exquisite conceptions ever embodied by the chisel.

beauty, and transferred to perishable canvas, the impressions made upon his imagination by flashes of celestial fire. Yet even this painter-poet must yield in imagination and delicate conception to his Italian rivals. Guido Reni, the voluptuous Vacaro, Titian, the younger Correggio, Carlo Dolce, cull and choose, and toy and revel with creatures shining in the light of paradise; figures met with in some hallowed solitude, or sunny enchanted island, accessible to none but immortal pilgrims. Murillo is the shepherd-boy upon the mountains, who sees a goddess pass, and adores her, and her alone—for he has seen no other heavenly form. His aspirations are in her name—his memory repeats her image, a thousand times, but ever the same. The portraits of Velasquez, so replete with truth and fluent colouring; and his historical pictures, not less remarkable for the grave simplicity of the fore-ground, than the glorious landscape in the distance, stamp him as the favoured follower of nature, a vigilant observer of all her changing moods. His scenes of vulgar life and revelry confirm his claim to this peculiar excellence.

But his aspirations soared not beyond the earth. He walked not in realms of glory, conversed not with angels, nor wandered far from mortal haunts, like his more impassioned pupil; and purity, chastity, and truth, are the characteristics of Velasquez, which he inherited from his master. Murillo adds to these qualities a richness of tone, transparency of light, and vigour of conception, which are exclusively his own.

Ribera belongs more properly to the Neapolitan than the Spanish school. His studies were pursued and completed in Italy in the manner then in vogue; for one of the reasons why there is less originality and vigour of conception, than of softness and tenderness of expression in the Italian masters, is the monopoly of influence effected by three or four masters, and their schools, against which few ventured to rebel. Salvator Rosa made the attempt and failed, more from his headlong imagination, untamed by study, than from want of native strength to support him in the struggle. Ribera, too, became an authority, and the founder of a school, after a fashion. Some traits or glim-

merings of sublimity may here and there be discovered among his works; but a constant straining at unnatural effect, a disordered and violent contrast of light and shade, are the leading characters of his style. His design often borders upon caricature; his anatomy is forced and exaggerated. If the suavity of colouring which distinguishes his best pictures be his redeeming excellence, it does not compensate for the other numerous defects of this too highly lauded painter.

The remaining masters of the Spanish school possess, in a greater or less degree, the faults and merits of the already mentioned giants of the pallet. For with the exception of Coëllo and Juan de Juanes, none of them appear to have struck out a path for themselves towards immortality. A tame imitation of the “mighty three” is to be detected in all their productions. Some of those submissive followers of unattainable excellence might have succeeded better in the illustration of their own conceptions, and would have had better claims on posterity than the engraving of their names, and sculpture

of their busts between the columns of the Museum.

Though indisputably worthy of all devotion and precedence, it is to be regretted that the celestial hierarchy have had such an exclusive hold on the pencils and imaginations of the Spanish artists. The “Sacred Writings” are rich in imposing subjects of composition; but general history and manners offer others scarcely less deserving of commemoration. The influence of the Inquisition, however, on the habits and inclinations of the nation at large, must have contributed in the greatest degree to circumscribe artists to scriptural and legendary illustration, and to church decoration.

The saloons devoted to the Spanish school are but thinly hung with the productions of the minor painters. The blaze of genius of Velasquez, Murillo, and Ribera, has been judged—rightly so—of too dazzling a nature to admit less brilliant and happy competitors within its focus.

That picture to the left, on entering, can own but one pencil in the world: it is the famous

Nativity of Murillo. That Virgin face, betrays "his thought by day, his dream by night," the portraiture of some lovely being, seen but once, never again to be beheld, but whose image is re-produced in all his pictures. That countenance, more than the breaking day, illuminates the obscurity of the humble cow-house, and fixes the abashed looks of the simple shepherds. They are there, in the untutored posture of humble adoration, their garments displaying rents and seams, and the marks of their owners' uncleanly habits; the dust and stains of unwashed feet; the staff, and hat, and calabash, are the sure signs of wayfarers. They are exactly such shepherds as you will meet now-a-days on the mountains of the Sierra Morocco, or in the sheep-walks of the Estremadura. They are so naturally figured forth—their looks and attitudes are in such perfect keeping, that the whole composition appears one of those felicitous creations, flowing without effort from the pencil, which the most fastidious connoisseur at once distinguishes as the triumph of art, while to

the ignorant spectator its close adherence to nature makes it seem a work of easy accomplishment. The *clara-oscuro* is magical; a rich brown tone prevails throughout, producing a depth and transparency of shadow which painters often seek for, but seldom attain. The animals are blended, and harmonized in the secondary grouping.

Turn to the "Conception"—to that galaxy of light, "pure ethereal," losing itself in dazzling perspective to that all-heavenly countenance, distilling sweetness and beauty and tenderness, the object of the painter's passion—

"Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!"

This is no cold or calculated imagining of a given subject: it is the yearning of a strong human heart after immortal loveliness. His thoughts were not in heaven *then*, but in the depths of his own bosom, condensing into one long remembrance all that ever flashed through his brain and soul and memory, of great and enchanting; and superior to this our mortal state and mould, he seized that agitated spark, struck

from his heart's core, and imparted it, bright and sparkling and glorious, to his canvas!

The halls destined to sculpture are not yet open to the public. Sola and Alvarez have largely contributed to their own and their country's reputation, by their groups—of *the Siege of Saragoza*, the *Death of Eloiz y Avelarde*, &c.

There are many other "jewels" of art worthy of ample commemoration in the various other saloons. The Museum contains materials for a very interesting volume, to write which requires an abler pen than the present writer can boast of. Such subjects should be left to those who either possess, or have warmed themselves at the "sacred fire" of sympathetic genius.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Armoury.

JUDGING by its modest external appearance, no one would be apt to suspect it to be the “local” destined to the preservation of so many precious vestiges of the olden times, and proofs of the vigour of ancestral thews and sinews, when a ponderous casque was worn as a modern “fly cap,” by a giddy belle, scarcely reminding its wearer of the incumbrance, and a goodly hauberk, or coat of Milan, sported with the ease and pretensions of our actual modish waistcoat.

The building which contains these curiosities, is directly in front of the royal palace, and was formerly appropriated to much more humble uses. The whole of the ground-floor is still occupied as a guard-room, by the household troops on duty. The dark and narrow staircase, and straight doorway, are extremely ill-calculated to raise the expectations of the curious in such things; and, altogether, this would seem the last place in the world, or at least in Madrid, where a national collection of iron and steel traditionary lore would be looked for.

An “agreeable surprise,” however, awaits the spectator, the moment he enters the spacious saloon. The most perfect cleanliness and care are united with admirable good order and skilful arrangement of the different classes of arms and armour. The peculiar dryness of the Madrid atmosphere, no doubt, contributes greatly to their more perfect preservation; but not less praise is due to the keeper, who has also a strong claim upon the gratitude of all the worthies, whose mortal defences he contrives to keep in

their present state of brilliancy. Perhaps they did not look so well, even when attended to by the squires, and men-at-arms of the ancient Paladins themselves.

Here, the despoils of Moor and Saracen, and Christian knight, hang up in apparent peace and good neighbourhood, though mayhap still reflecting a hostile ray from mail and handsword forged in Lombardy and famed Toledo, to the productions of the fair and far Damascus. The indented brand of the storied Don Pelago—him of the Asturias, as first submitted to the respectful gaze of modern pygmies, who readily conceive a predisposition to flight when menaced by such an edge; the trusty Toledo of “the Cid,” not always drawn in patriotic cause, and much oftener the weapon of a lucky freebooter than of a national leader; the swords of various kings, more fond of battle than those of the present day; the rapier of the great emperor, Charles the fifth, and that of his rival, Francis the First of France; the arms of Hernan del Pulgar, and the stout Paredes, Fernando Cortes, and the cruel Pizarro, bloody “Alba,” the brave

and courteous Don Juan, of Austria; the great captain Gonsalvo, of Cordova—are all successively pointed out. Pikes and petrels, arquebusses and hatches, with every conceivable variety of invention for piercing, crushing, and bruising, all of which have been wielded by stouter hands than mine, excite an inward jubilee and thanksgiving, at having been born so many centuries beyond the reach of the vigorous and ruthless owners of such death-dealing instruments.

The collection of defensive armour is also varied and interesting, not only from the heroes to whom it belonged, but for its exquisite workmanship and inlaying of gold and silver, an art now, I believe, lost, or fallen into disuse. *One* suit of plain steel, which is pointed out, would not, from its appearance, claim our attention, although told that it belonged to a Moorish king, did not the extreme size and thickness of the helmet invite a closer and more minute inspection. On the right side of this is placed a small wicket, of at least an inch in thickness, with its spring and button outside, to facilitate

its opening, and the communication of news to his majesty on the field of battle. So carefully closed on all sides is this helmet, and withal so heavy, that it is difficult to conceive how any human head could have supported the weight, otherwise than by supposing that it must have been a good deal rested on the shoulder-pieces. When informed that this strange head-piece belonged to the recreant king who lost Grenada to Boabdil, not el Chico, but *el Zogoybi*, the origin of the cognomen is but too evident, for any more condemned to wear such head gear, merits trebly and quintuply the title of “The Unfortunate.”

The vicissitudes of Spain have at least afforded her the opportunity of bringing together the most interesting and original collection of offensive and defensive armour in Europe. Other exhibitions of this sort may possibly be more numerous; but none of them, as far as I am aware, can rival that of Madrid, in the undoubted authenticity and diversity of the specimens. There are various other objects in this armoury, well meriting a larger and more de-

tached description,—and which, in better hands, would prove far from uninteresting. But in this case, as well as in that of the Museum of the Prado, I could strongly recommend the English reader to abandon for a time his fireside, his tea and toast, and muffins, with all the *et ceteras* of domestic comfort, and “rough it” on chocolate, and *garbanzos* and *dos colchones*, (two mattresses) for a few months, until he has seen all these things with his own eyes. After he *has* seen them, I am not afraid of his repenting having followed my advice.

CHAPTER XVIII.

New Year's Day.—Echar el año.

1, 2, 3, 4,

THE vigil of the first of January is still kept as a night of festivity in Spain. The young and old assemble, the first to hail a new and welcome visitor, the latter to take leave of a regretted friend, whose return they cannot long count upon. The *tertulia* of this evening, though more extended than that on Christmas night, is still confined to well-known faces, and guests long in the habit of frequenting the house. Old habits and customs are getting so much out of fashion everywhere, and egotism is so busy replacing

the frank, good-natured hilarity of our fore-fathers, that even the festival duty of obliging a family with one's presence on this particular night, where it was spontaneously inflicted during every other in the year, is considered by many as a great bore and hardship. For the junior portion of the *tertulia* have ordinarily their own plays and objects in view, for the night,—and the “seniors” don't like noise. In short, the family may be assured, that, of all the smiling faces they see trooping into their apartments, the greater number are wishing themselves anywhere else,—that some doubted more than once, as they went up stairs, whether it would not be better to go down again; while others, even with a hand on the bell-string, lingered ere they gave the irrevocable pull. “Vaya! we are compromised—it is only one evening; we are old friends of the house; it is a good and convenient lounge, not far from the theatres;—an excellent half-way house. What would people say?” and the bell is pulled.* The Asturian

* Their presence at these annual family parties is the only

bumpkin who opens the door, is, probably, the only sincerely joyful participator in the meeting: first, because he is essentially good-natured, and fond of his masters, if not too much looked after on the score of cleanliness; and, secondly, because he knows that on such occasions there is always some guest who does not finish his wine and cake. This promising perspective makes him grin broadly as the visitors pour in, remaining himself in a fit of abstracted contemplation of all “the dainties he has had a hand in laying before them.”

Once the kisses given and received by the ladies, *mantillas* taken off,* shawls and cloaks compliment which the mistress of the *tertulia* looks to from her guests, in return for the liberty they enjoy of visiting her house all the year round. It would be considered a great want of good-breeding and friendship to fail appearing on those occasions, if comprised in the number of *amigos de casa*. Perhaps this spice of obligation about it, is all that makes the attendance of the latter irksome; or, rather, our selfishness is without limits.

* The *mantilla* is not taken off the head, unless the visit is meant to be of some duration. It is always kept on during ordinary visits, &c.

laid aside, people begin to group together, and conversation becomes more animated. “ Well, Conchita,* on what terms do you part with the year of our Lord ? *Alegremente*, I suppose—come one, come ten,—what do you care ! a young bird scarcely fledged from the nest ; glad to see anything new, although it be another year added to the account ? Vaya ! Niña ! I always see it take leave of me with great regret, like a tooth which cannot be replaced—*mas vale mal conocido—que bien a conocer* (better evil al-

* The women in Spain are all known and called by their Christian names. The mode of addressing them is a point on which all strangers are greatly puzzled, on their first introduction to Spanish society. There is no synonyme for “ *Madame*,” which settles every thing so comfortably in French ; *Madama*, the literal translation of it, being looked upon as a term of ridicule, or only now and then used in the translations of French dramatic pieces. To put “ *Doña*” before the name, is ten times worse ; only duennas and big-bellied black-bottles are called *Donnas* (*Doña Juana* is the term for such capacious flasks.) The ladies would stare and titter, and fan themselves quicker and quicker, the oftener you say it. You have still the “ *Señora*” left to be sure ; but that will do for all woman-kind, and it is necessary to

ready known, than good which you have yet to know.”—“Vamos, Don Crespo, if you were so old, you would not talk so much about it; and I am sure you do not wear a wig yet.”—“No, Picarilla—no, not a wig, thank God! a *casquete a lo mas* (a toupet at most). But I must stop that wicked little mouth—Oh! what delicious yolks of eggs! from the confiteria of the Calle de Majaderitos: try them, Louisa!”—“Do you know, my dear, that I ate of them until I nearly burst,” said Pedra, a young married woman. “Pepe, my *primo*, was so *fino*, he would have

distinguish. If you couple the surname with “Señora,” the sooner you vanish the better. No woman, married or single, can stand being “Señora Gomez,” Señorita Velasquez. The only resource, therefore, is to use the Christian name. But how could a foreigner, the first or second time he sees a young lady, venture to call her Jane or Nancy? There is no “Mademoiselle” in Spanish to help him out of the scrape. He must actually call her by the diminution of her name, which, strange to say, is considered more distant and respectful than the name itself. For instance, if a mother speaks to her daughter, she will call her simply *Pepa, Luisa, Dolores*, &c.; the visitor must address her as *Pepita, Luisita, Doloritas*, &c.

me do *disparates*, although he knows I do not much care about *dulces*.”—“Muy bien! I kiss your hand, wife,” said her husband (husbands are always saying ill-natured things), “it was doubtless this indifference which made you fill your handkerchief and reticule with *caramelos* and *besos de dama* (ladies’ kisses). God help the poor man who goes into a cake-shop with you!”—“Fie! Lorenzo! you know it was all for the *chicos* (the children), was it not, Pepe?” But Pepe seemed exclusively and warmly occupied in explaining the steps and figure of the *galopa* to a very young and beautiful girl, a native of the Havannah, just arrived from Cadiz. Pedra was furious. “ ’Tis a pity some people have mistaken their calling, and are not bred up dancing-masters.”—“Muger (wife)!” again interrupted her Lorenzo, “leave us in peace; let Pepe alone—it is natural that people of the same age should wish to be together.”—“Si, Señor, it seems you forget your *fe de bautismo*.”—“Well! I deserve this; but women are always foolish once in their lives!”

“*Buenas noches! a los pies de Ustedes*,” said

a slight middle-sized man, with white hair and hooked nose, “*muy felices las tengan Ustedes.*” He put his hat aside, without being told,* and walked leisurely into the middle of the circle. “Long faces! how is this? I thought mine would be the only one of that description to be found this night in Madrid, and that because I cannot help it. A long face, and white hairs, God has given to me, and St. Peter will bless them. I thought to have an *alegria* complete here, a round of laughing, and singing, and dancing. It is so comfortable to get rid of an old tiresome friend—should it add even twelve months more to the account! Pray, Dolorcitas! play something; an *aria* from the “Pirata,” a waltz, rigodon, fandango, anything—I see that sly Jesusa dying to dance with me!”

The man who thus announced himself was a

* On visits of etiquette, the hat is retained in the hand. It is considered familiar to put it aside, unless invited thereto, which is usually done to a visitor on entering a room;—on the other hand, it would be regarded as a mark of stiff formality, and give offence, if you were to persist in retaining it in your hand, after being requested to put it aside.

well-known character upon the town. He had been a captain in the Walloon Guards, when that corps was in its pride, and since its reduction, he had never sought for any military employment. A fixture in the theatres, a constant frequenter of the walks and cafés of the capital, and one who never dined at his own expense. He was an oracle in politics, a wholesale dealer in scandal. Nobody loved him, but he was feared and courted for his evil tongue. He affords a practical illustration of the proverb—“Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them.” He was on the same familiar footing at most comfortable homes, as his manners showed him to be in this *tertulia*. The spinsters respected, feared, and hated him altogether, for his influence over the acts and opinions of marrying men respecting their sex. Such was Don Bernardo. He was lively, and had a knack of making others so. He told “funny” stories too, and strung them together well. When the young folks ceased dancing from lack of volunteers at the piano, he was sure to have a circle about him, hanging on his words. The usual

exclamation, when he took leave was, “who would ever think that Don Bernardo could be so ill-natured as he is, after making one laugh so!” The *tertulia* of old friends sat down to supper, and gradually began to think better of the vigil of New-year’s-day. Don Bernardo was *muy gracioso*, very droll, and set them all in a roar on various occasions. The Asturian bumpkin proved his comprehension of a good joke, by laughing a great deal louder than any body else, notwithstanding his tongue, and half of a large napkin being thrust into his cheek, to prevent any indecorous explosion of hilarity before his betters.

To complete the domestic character of the evening, the children were allowed “to sit up,” and after supper, just as the clock struck twelve, lisped forth a pretty address, composed by their “Dominie,” in honour of their parents, wishing them *dilatados años*, (long and happy years), concluding with *decima*, a piece, expressive of their infantine gratitude towards such tender protectors. Their overwhelmed and delighted mother covered them with tears and kisses. The young ladies had a brilliant tear glistening

on their eyelids, but the men, Don Bernardo especially, were heartily tired of the scene.

The new-year was now well in. Good wishes were mutually exchanged, and the tertulia began to think of breaking up. Embraced, and embracing, the ladies took leave, the children were sent to bed with a cake or sugar plum in each hand, to prevent their screaming. The parents and daughters again read and cried over the *decimas*, the author was invited to dinner the following day, besides inheriting a very tolerable suit of the *amo's* black clothes. And this is called *echar el año* (to shove out the year), in short to get rid of it, as one does of any thing else, animate or inanimate, of no further use. The new-year has commenced its career, not to be distinguished from its thousand predecessors, but by some fresh little invention of fate, to remind us still more strongly of our mortality.

CHAPTER XIX.

Dia de Reyes—Twelfth Night.

ON the 6th of January, most tertulias are very busy indeed, assembling the names of all the young men and women of their acquaintance, shuffling them together in a little bag, where they remain until night, when the drawing takes place. This lottery is not always, however, left to blind chance. If any couple are known to have a hankering for each other, the arranger of the lots, especially if she be a woman, (kind and

compassionate creatures!) contrives to have them drawn together,—an innocent deception which affords room for sundry inuendoes, and smart sayings on the part of the company; and a fair field for blushes and sidelong looks on that of the denounced culprits, who, doubtless, with the intention of comparing notes, contrive to keep together for the rest of the evening. It must be allowed that Spaniards are much better bred in some points and delicacies of society than many other nations that pique themselves on their infinite superiority in this and every other respect. When once two young hearts are supposed to have united—after the first few customary jokes, they are left to themselves and to their feelings. No painful notice is taken of their intimacy—no prying eyes are darted upon them; nor are elderly prudes and envious spinsters engaged in detecting their every look, word, and action, and wondering how people can be so “improper.” In this country, it is considered that young folks have a right to like and love one another, although both parties should be as poor as Job, and not even have *sobre que caerse muerto* (a

something whereupon to fall dead).^{*} They are fatalists in love and marriage; they yoke most readily and joyfully. If any sober friend who has observed the ways of this world, should suggest how necessary some little property is to keep the devil out of the house, the *enamorados* only laugh and answer—*Dios nos amparara* (God will help us). This ejaculation does not spring from any religious feeling; no, it is a mere routine expression. In like manner, as heretical and irascible Englishmen tell one another to be d—d, without any wish, thought, or intention, that they should roast for it, Spaniards are accustomed to say—*Dios lo remedie!* (God will remedy it and help us), which means, in other words, “we are both young, and brimful of passion—we like each other exceedingly—we will do our will, come what may.” On such occasions, God is seldom thought of.

At night the *tertulia* assembles, and when

* This is one of the many striking phrases in the Spanish language. It gives the last idea of extreme misery, “not even a rag to spread beneath his corpse.” It is, of course, used here, and, in general, in a figurative sense.

none of those comprised in the lottery are wanting, the signal is given, and the drawing begins. This childish pastime interests the vanity of many mustachioed and whiskered expectants, whose eyes sparkle if they are paired off with a well-known beauty, and evince equal mortification, if fortune has allotted them an ugly or hunch-backed partner. Arch girls call in the aid of the wild beasts in the *Retiro*, to revenge them on supercilious *lechuginos*. One who might consider himself a fit companion for a princess, is linked to the old lioness of the menagerie; another with the hyena, mandrilla, or other attractive *animalito de dios*. Such marriages produce a good deal of merriment, at the expense of the human partners. The evening advances—the cake is handed round—he or she who gets the bean* is king or queen, and has the privilege of choosing the partner of the throne. His majesty being always considered as having contracted the obligation of treating his

* The bean in Spain and France supplies the place of the ring in England. The conditions are the same.

numerous subjects at some other time—a condition which greatly moderates the pleasure of his reign.

Whatever attractions may attend the royal purple, ennui would soon visit the *tertulia*, were it not for the exhaustless topic of the ensuing masked balls. In them is centered the whole existence of the *muchachas* (the young ladies), and not a small part of the thoughts of the young men. “Did you hear, Incarnacioncita, that the balls are to begin the day after to-morrow, the eighth, at St. Catalina?”—“Si, si, (yes, yes), chica, what a nice queen we have! How good she is in giving us leave to dance, and mask and amuse ourselves. Really I love her ‘de corazon’ (from my heart). Oh! nothing, they say, can be more brilliant; and the tickets are only thirty reals, a mere *friolera* (trifle). Such fine tapestry and hangings, wax-lights; and only think! a rich carpet too.”—“Ah!” said Mercedes, “I would give my eyes to go to them all, one after the other. It is very odd, I never feel tired; the more I dance the less I feel it: mamma said last year that I grew thin and pale; that it would kill

me: I never was so well in all my life—was I mamma?"

At the first mention of the "masked balls," an attentive observer might have detected various changes of physiognomy in the whole party. The mammas looked a little prim and imposing, knowing their own weight in the scale. The papas, although occupied farther off, in all the intricacies of their beloved *tresillo*, a game, in most respects, similar to whist, but rather more complicated—it forms the evening amusement of all classes throughout the Peninsula, there is no house, great or small, rich or poor, without a pack of magic looking cards, with strange cabalistical signs painted upon them)—looked scowlingly across to their spouses, what was left of the glance took in, in a general way, their chattering offspring. Some heads of families, indeed, fastened an additional button in their gaping pockets, as if anticipating a determined "rifle." The young females of the party, with eyes glistening with delight at the enchanting prospect before them, looked beseechingly at their mammas, and sideways at their sterner papas. "Besides," said

Pilar from her corner, where she had till now been very much engaged with her *primo* (her husband by lottery), “Besides, the expense is nothing, for I can run a *domino* together as well as any *modista*, (milliner), and would not at all mind trying my needle at a silk *careta* either. They are abominable cheats, these *modistas*—I am sure I did not wonder that poor papa was so angry last year at their bill. But this time it is different. Papa, who went out this morning on purpose, told me that things were now a great deal cheaper; silks for *dominos* and *trages* (costumes) especially. I can make a very nice one for papa, and you know it is quite different when things are made up at home. Is it not, Manuel?”

Manuel, the *primo*, answered, “yo lo creo, (no doubt), with a look up of his eyes to the ceiling, and an almost inaudible whistle in the manner of the Portuguese Phew! “Yo lo creo,” said he, as if the thing was too palpable to require farther speech. “Well, chicas,” (my dears), said Dolores, “now that it is all settled, what colours shall we choose to avoid confusion? Besides, we can take different subscriptions, and

change about."—"Oh, what a clever thought, Dolores! kiss me for it! But you are always so sharp. I know papa likes changing, and then it is only the expense of the carriage." "*Coche!*" (carriage) exclaimed her father, by this time laying down his cards, and raising his spectacles on his forehead, "*coche! de impresas varias,*/* I suppose, eh? Do you imagine I have the two thousand and fifty reals spent in coach-hire alone last year, for you, and your mother, who sits so quiet there, suspecting that her husband has lost his senses—*nones! nones!* (no! no!) no masked balls for me. God has given us faces, such as they are, shew them. Your husband, when you have got one, may take you there as often as he likes. But I shall not be caught again in such a *barullo.*" Here he took

* *Impresas varias*, (various enterprises). This is an establishment formed since the year 1830, to let out carriages for hire,—for weaving carpets, &c. It is a great step towards the comforts of ready communication, though as yet expensive, and not very well served, like most things in their infancy. The carriages of this company are splendid, compared to the immemorial vehicles in which the unfortunate stranger was jolted and be-vermined some years ago.

up his cards, re-adjusted his spectacles, and resumed his game with an irrevocable air. All the fathers in the room copied his face exactly. They formed the most repulsive set of visages possible. The daughters looked miserable, notwithstanding the little encouraging nods of their kind-hearted mothers, shutting their eyes close at each nod, the downward motion of the outspread hand, counselling silence and hope.—“Papaito mio,” (my dear papa !) said Conchita, more heart-stricken than the rest, or fancying she possessed greater influence over her father, and approaching his chair, “surely you will take your Conchita! She will make all her own clothes.”—“Niña! dejarme en paz—(child, leave me alone). Pray, Antonia, take her away with you. “*Jesus! que demonio!*” (Jesus! what a devil!) *Ah, que demonio!*” was re-echoed all down the line of repulsive faces. “Never mind them, dear,” said the stout Manuel. “*Mas ruedo que nueces,*” (more noise than walnuts !) You shall all be tired of going to masked balls yet, and laugh at all this blustering. If I knew your mamma well, *Sus Señorías*, (their worships)

will have to do this *y tres veces mas* (and three times more)—*y muchissimas gracias*, (with many thanks) for being so moderate. Vaya! a pretty set of papas, indeed!"

Manuel, in allusion to his knowledge of maternal influence, revived certain reminiscences of their powers of persuasion, and came like a balm over fallen hopes. "Ah!" said more than one *muchacha*, "if ever I draw the bean, Manuel shall be *my* king." Manuel was courted and consulted. The subject of dress, costume, and making, was reserved as if nothing had occurred to interrupt it—rendezvous were fixed at different balls. The king and queen of the night, gave the signal for the breaking up of the court. Each lottery husband escorted his wife to her door, excepting the *caballeros*, who had had the satisfaction of being united to companions, already snugly made up for the night in the menagerie of the Retiro. A few sound curtain lectures in all probability settled the question of the *coche*, and the balls and dresses; for the whole *tertulia* of that evening, was seen two days after in a brilliant *compania* of Swiss

mountaineers, and miniature - footed Chinese spinsters. This coupling of the sexes on twelfth-night, is called *hacer los estrechos*, (tying the knots) ; fortunately these are not of durable materials.

CHAPTER XX.

Santa Maria de la Cabeza—Shrove Monday.

THERE is a state of mind which sometimes besets us, when our ideas get huddled together and become drowsy, and, as it were, lean for support on one another, each determined to work as little as possible ; a kind of vague day-dream, when one has no fixed object or purpose, and is willing to let every thing take its own way. One of the last occasions on which I felt myself in this listless mood, was on Shrove Monday, which

happens to be the feast of Santa Maria de la Cabeza, (St. Mary of the head),* a sweet flower

* Thus saith the legend, “ So called, from Caraquiz (near Tor de la guisa), where there was an image of our lady, “ de la Cabeza,” or because it was her own name, or from living in the village Colena, the property of the family of Cabeza. She was married here. The devil, jealous of her virtues, attempted to set her and San Isidro by the ears. He even appeared to a labourer,—“ are you going to Madrid? for your life and salvation, tell Isidro that his wife, under pretence of going to church, goes to gallivant with the shepherds of the valley : that she scandalizes every body.” So saying, he disappeared.

“ The labourer, after many round-abouts, insinuaed what had been thus told to him to Isidro, who, as may be supposed, was sorely vexed. He set off instantly to verify matters ; a great storm of rain took place while he was on his journey, which caused the river to swell prodigiously. When he came within sight of Caraquiz, he saw the Blessed Mary coming out of her house, covered with her little mantle, bearing a torch light in one hand, and in the other, the vessel in which she carried the oil. When she came to the brink of the river, after having prayed, she spread her mantle on the impetuous waters, and animated by her Lady (who appeared to her on that occasion), stepped upon the mantle, making the sign of the cross, the Virgin giving her hand, she passed without fear to the other side.”

of sanctity, once the faithful spouse of the glorious Saint Isidro, the labourer, the patron of Madrid, and now scarcely less venerated by the populace of that “heroic city,” than her husband.” The scenes of her life and miracles passed in those meadows, spread out on either side of the canal.

I found myself unconsciously mixed in a crowd of people, all of the middling or lower classes, which was pouring down from the gate of Atocha, that of Valencia, and Embajadores, hastening to this traditionaly spot, their looks strongly expressive of anticipated pleasure and gratification. I followed their steps through the long vista of trees somewhat vauntingly denominated *Las Delicias*, entered the gate of the canal-harbour, with all its luxury of stores and offices never to be of any use, and crossed the pretty wooden bridge over the canal, when the groups dispersed and spread themselves over the fields on the borders of the river, whose scanty waters, sparkling in the light of the sun, contributed to animate the scene. He shone gaily and brightly upon every thing and every body,

through a clear winter sky, and exhibited to advantage the varied and gorgeous hues of the fancy dresses, with which many of the female pedestrians were bedizened, and made the *aguilletes* and tinsel cockade of their cavaliers' *gacho* (hat), look doubly smart and rakish.

The shouts and vociferations of this light-hearted crowd, decked out in all the fantastic extravagance of masking time, and their boundings and gambols on the road leading down from the General Hospital, were such as might, at first, have led one to doubt whether the inmates of that philanthropic establishment, the *Casa de Locos* (Lunatic Hospital), had not forced bolts and bars, and exchanged their straight-waistcoats for others of a more elastic and becoming model. Some, it is true, looked as if they had been forced into this public revelry in an unguarded moment, and eyed their own dresses and their companions' with a shamefaced air. A smart thwack over the shoulders from the limber lath of the jack-pudding of the *Comparsa* roused them from such reverie, and reminded them of the unseasonableness of all reflection.

A keen wind was abroad, inviting both exercise and appetite ; it appeared greatly to the satisfaction of numerous elderly *manolas*, who being too stiff to figure in the dance, devoted themselves to ministering to the wants of the company, in the shape of *vesugo escabechado*, nuts, raisins, oranges, and figs ; cocks and hens, horses, and gilt horsemen of ginger bread, *bollos*, and all sorts of cakes known to tempt Madrid palates. Each trying to tempt customers, by the strength and variety of tones in which they announced and praised their merchandize.

There are occasions when appetite (it is common to clowns and gentlemen) is strangely tempted by this public ministry and display of eatables, and doubtless, did not the “mode” and point of honour, (sadly misplaced by both sexes) whisper forbearance, more than one *lechugino* and delicate *niña*, would be seen devouring with relish, the supply intended for more homely mouths. Troops of young brats, trusting to their legs for customers, go winding through the crowd, offering circles of flour-paste fried in oil to epicures ; they are run on a long

lath held by the middle, to prevent them from being broken. It is surprising to see how rapidly the laths are eased of their burden, and the brittle fry consumed. The kitchen is not far off, and two cooks in their shirt sleeves, are busily engaged in producing fresh supplies. One of these keeps a large iron pan of oil over a stand of charcoal, where it fries and hisses most invitingly; the other seated before a vessel filled with water, and another with flour-paste, forms the cake in a moment, drawing out the paste into a hollow ring. Thence he flings it into the bubbling oil, when it browns and swells into a crisp mouthful. When fresh and hot, and still dripping with the strong-tasted oil of Arragon, every one must allow it to be quite irresistible.

Despite the leafless trees, the hoary field and nipping blast, the usual number of water sellers bustle among the crowd, praising their liquid in the self-same terms, customary in the dog-days. *Rica y fresca!* (rich and fresh), *ay que fria,* (ah! how cold!) But the Madridenians have the most inordinate passion for water-drinking all the year round, provided only it be not in their own houses.

Among the sports prepared for the relaxation of the ladies, some gallant cavaliers had soon got up swings between the trees, and amused themselves sending the persons of their mistresses as near the clouds as such humble terrestrials could hope for. A cravat from the neck of one of the bystanders, fastened immediately above the knee, secures the lower garments of the suspended beauty from the action of the wind, and presents a barrier to the indiscreet wanderings of any roving eye. She cannot certainly complain of the want of vigour and good will in her adorers. Some, awaiting her descent towards the ground, seize her by the well-turned legs, and send their owner back with redoubled velocity. Others, more daring or more privileged, watch the favourable moment, and by a passing application of their hands behind, give an increased impetus to her movement in the opposite direction. Screams from the *muchacha*, and shouts of laughter from her *beaux* give fresh zest to this rough pastime, until the *merienda*, repast, recompenses their toils.

Various groups and crowds were studding the

fields, amusing themselves according to their different inclinations. Wherever there is room for choice, I am always inclined to prefer the re-union where females predominate. Independent of the pleasure one has in looking at and hearing them, there is this great advantage, that in case of a “squeeze,” you are not jammed in between (as in a male crowd) angular and resisting forms, with which it is disagreeable, and often painful, to come in contact, but softly cradled on every side, meeting sympathetic and elastic contact with well-rounded forms, and sometimes well-wadded petticoats. Besides, women are little, and one sees well over them. For these several reasons, I made towards that part of the assemblage which showed most farthingales and *mantillas*, and placed myself advantageously to see what was going forward in the circle formed inside.

The ring was kept by a “cavalier,” in a high conical paper cap, made of cuttings of different colours, corresponding with his dress, which was of the same materials. This costume, and a long ozier-wand, marked him out as the steward of the

ball. His face was also bedaubed after the most approved method, and greatly aided him in keeping the ground clear, with the requisite degree of dignity and effect. A remarkably tall serjeant of the Provincial Guards, with his foraging cap on one ear, put me strongly in mind of the story in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, of the big man and the dwarf at the theatre. But his rudeness was not punished like that of his rival in bulk. Placing himself in the centre of the circle, neither the exertions of the ozier-wand, and rustling paper robes of the steward, nor the murmurs of the bystanders could induce him to budge one inch from the side of a smart buxom wench whom he had marked for his own.

The young women were seated in a ring, occupied in tying up the hair of their companions, and making other preparations for the dance, in which they managed to introduce no small share of coquetry. After many earnest supplications from the men, most of them got up and began to form the ring, the prettiest standing out the last. Some even threatened to carry

matters to extremities, and decline the ball altogether; and among these, the charmer of the colossal serjeant was one of the most intractable, and almost drove her admirer to despair by her repeated refusal to dance at all. At length his gold lace and mustachios, her own vanity, the tinkling of three or four guitars, and the rolling smack of castanets, gradually shook this provoking determination, and she finally joined the ring. The music sounds. The couples face, and take each other by the hand; the women alone strike the castanet; the men imitate its action with arms and hands, passing with gentle movement from side to side, until they have completed the round. The perilous oscillations of the serjeant's arms, resembling in length and vigour the fans of a windmill, secured a much more ample space for his partner than she had any right to—the male dancers unanimously considered it most prudent to avoid any contact with so formidable a neighbour. The mothers and younger children remained seated in the middle, laughing and criticising the efforts of the dancers.

The increasing coldness of the wind, and downward movement of the sun, gradually reminded even the dancers, that "sober suns must set at five o'clock." The crowd again poured through the walks homeward, the colossal serjeant, towering far above his fellows, and bearing off in triumph his buxom partner, hanging on one arm, while from the other, her Tia Juana, (aunt Joan), an old *manola*, suspended her well-tanned arm, and a handkerchief of oranges, insidious offering of her new acquaintance, to propitiate so formidable a foe to future operations.

CHAPTER XXI.

La Feria. The Fair.

No festival throughout the year is hailed by the Madrilenians with such hearty welcome as the “Fair.” It is an agreeable era, from which they like to date. “So many years last fair;” “three fairs back,” &c., are common expressions in the mouth of every body. They are very fond of their fair, and with some reason, for it takes place precisely about the time when a Madrid sky is in all its blue and speckless intensity of beauty, and the bright and glorious sun is lend-

ing its last mellow russet to the vintage. This is the season of mirth, and plenty, and rejoicing, in all southern latitudes, when every body is inclined to be light-hearted and happy. A visit to Madrid at the time of the fair is regarded as the highest of all treats by the inhabitants of the different provinces; and the concourse of them drawn thither by the attraction, adds, in no small degree, to the beauty and interest of the scene.

The approach of the twenty-first of September (the day it begins) is gradually announced by the progressive incumbrance of the streets and squares with the ill-constructed and fantastic booths of the various traders. The principal focus of traffic and fashion is comprised in the space extending from the Fountain of Cybele, at the opening of the Prado, up to the *Puerta del Sol*. The *Plazuela de San Martin*, the *Calle Tricométrigo*, &c., are also attractive points.

The fair is looked forward to with lively pleasure and expectation, both by married ladies not turned forty, however well they may love their lords, and by misses of all ages, without exception, who never fail to build innumerable

castles in the air, to people them with fair-haired youths of “ archangel form,” in which aspirations and vague desires, they are more or less cordially joined by a tolerable proportion of the opposite sex.

This extraordinary bazaar summons all the relics of the most remote and venerable antiquity, even to its preserved specimens of furniture, of date and form so ancient, that even bugs, animals not otherwise fastidious, despair of any thing like comfort in their gaping chinks and crevices, and abandon them to their fate. Heavy chests, inlaid with steel and brass work ; arm-chairs of sturdy oak, and leatheren back, and quaint devices picked out with silk embroidery, or innumerable brazen points ; chairs once cased in flowered damask, and tending a dangling remnant to the wind ; wardrobes, tables, bedsteads, every article, in short, that defunct genius ever invented, is here to be found—and to be avoided. It is inconceivable how the lieges of the most Catholic king, can be at the trouble and expense of drawing from their hiding places, and exhibiting to the light of day such a heap of mouldering

rubbish, offering no temptation to the buyer, who, if a faithful attendant at the fair, may recognise many an old acquaintance figuring in the same post, and sharing the same neglect from year to year, as happens with the great bulk of the objects exposed to sale.

Mingled with these respectable emblems of the past, may here and there be found articles of more modern taste and finish; for here the two extremes are made to meet. You may choose from the high four-post bed, with ladder and landing-place to match, (which must have cost sore trials of “inning and outing” to our worthy progenitors), to the light camp-bed of polished steel, from Bilboa, just eighteen inches from the ground, with its shining balls of brass; chests of drawers, also, and every other desideratum of modern exigency are here to suit your fancy. If about to take a wife yourself, or inclined to make a handsome present to a *nobia*, take a turn in the fair, and you may furnish her wedding-chamber in an hour.

The bibliomania and antiquary will also find food for their dusty archologic tastes, and may

stumble now and then upon something very curious in the way of black-letter and manuscript. “ Illuminated missals,” once so eagerly sought after in England, are not unfrequently found, of great antiquity and brilliancy of colouring, in the hands of brokers ignorant of their value. Occasionally, these turn up curious and rare copies of the earlier editions of the adventures of the rueful knight of La Mancha, with astounding wood-cuts ; ancient plays of Lope and Calderon ; and—precious indeed when brought to light—some vetust manuscripts of Moorish ballads and romances of the “ olden time.”

Here, too, you have varied opportunities of examining the state of your wrinkles, should you be unfortunate enough to have any, for there are looking-glasses of all dates and sizes, to reflect your person. Some of these present you with a cadaverous blue physiognomy ; others *couleur de rose* ; a third set lengthening the face, as on the receipt of the news of a rich old miserly uncle’s unexpected recovery from a mortal attack ; while a fourth widens it to so Dutch a breadth, that you start off, instinctively putting

hand to face, to be assured by feeling, that your features are still in their usual places.

The enormous quantities exhibited of earthenware, of all descriptions, red, white, and yellow, of indigenous fabric ; *pucheros*, *pucheritos*, pans, and dishes, and *casuelas*, utensils of all possible shapes and uses, make the *feria* essentially a sale of crockery, and impose upon the curious the necessity of being very circumspect in their treading. It cannot fail also frequently to excite a longing for one grand smash in the midst of such brittle ware. The sight of those nets of fragile glass flasks, more particularly awakens this principle of mischief. Valencia matting forms a prominent article of traffic. You may have it striped red and black, or plain, or stone-colour. The swarthy vender reminds you that winter—a sharp winter—is approaching, and that now is the time to buy it cheap.

Picture fanciers may also dwell on frames and painted canvas, in sufficient quantities to buy it by the yard. The subjects are generally taken from the lives of the saints, which, for reasons already adverted to, have always been decided

favorites with the Spanish artists. A singular chance, may now and then, detect a picture worth having. But the abundant harvest which this field formerly produced, has been so repeatedly reaped by French, and German, Italian, and English speculators, that there is little left for “*virtù*” now-a-days.

Children, those dear pledges of chaste affection, form, as usual, the ornament and nuisance of the fair. Here they direct their little feet and red shoes, to “try” the penny trumpets, whistles, and other elements of harmony placed at their disposal. They worry their delighted mothers, who would never think of bargaining less than an hour for each toy, did not a heightened scream from their interesting progeny frighten the passengers, and bring the purchase to a speedier conclusion.

There are not wanting even here, however, a certain number of grumblers, who are always asking the reason of things, and seeking a why and a wherefore for every thing; with whom *cui bono?* is a motto; and in whose eyes the “Feria” is an utter abomination. “What is the

use of it?" say they, "and all this lumber, which should be collected in a heap as soon as possible, and set fire to?" and they are so barbarous, as to hint that if one-half the persons to whom this lumber belongs, were thrown in with it, there would be a better blaze, and no great harm done; with many other comical and misanthropic exclamations. But, to my mind, these grumblers are very unreasonable. Viewed in its proper light, the fair is of the greatest public utility. In the first place, it ventilates a prodigious quantity of old garments, blankets, bedding and pillow-cases, cast-off dominos and small-clothes, which, but for that, would be exceedingly apt to create an epidemic almost as deadly as the cholera. Secondly.—Does not the Feria bring together an infinite number of amiable well-entertained human beings, mutually actuated by such kindly feelings, that they seem to have come here for no other purpose than to look and be looked at, and to dress at each other, and to be melted and squeezed together on the crowded narrow flagway, from twelve o'clock till two? I own that I like to see people

happy, or in a fair way to make themselves so ; judging, therefore, from the looks of the great mass of the spectators, I should hold it impossible that any thing could be more conducive to that end than a religious attendance at the fair for two hours daily, from the 21st of September, to the 4th of October, and longer, if Her Majesty gives permission, which is never denied when asked. Marriages, quarrels, broken pitchers, dogs lost, pockets picked, and sundry other misfortunes, may doubtless be traced to the fair ; but, Amigo ! this is one of the stern conditions of our nature, for some one has said a long time ago, *Nemo est ab omni parte beatus*—not even the fair of Madrid !

It was formerly held in the blood-thirsty *Plazuelu de la Cebada* (the place of public executions). But, doubtless, the idea of the gallows and garote, whether vile or noble, the mind's eye conjuring up the troops and Alguazils, *Paz y Caridad*, the executioner and his victim ; the torches blown in and out by a heedless wind ; the nasal echo of the last *de profundis* said for the culprit's departing soul ; and, to wind up all,

the *respice funem, respice finem*, must have operated as a sensible check on the hilarity of the frequenters of such diversions, by reminding them of some scores unsettled, and of awkward passages of their past lives. So the fair has been considerably removed to a less ominous quarter.

The “Feria,” as it is, and where it is, not only affords the best and most diversified lounge of the whole year, but is really a very curious, amusing, and motley assemblage of “men and things;” and I would, therefore, by all means vote for its continuance until there is an end of both.

CHAPTER XXII.

Navidad.—Christmas.

THIS festive and feasting time is still kept up in its full force and vigour throughout Spain. Madrid, at this period, presents a most original and animated picture. With a due and good-natured anticipation, the dwarfish pages, and cloudy printed columns of the *Diario* (daily advertiser) swell to bursting with announcements of the daily arrivals of tit-bits, tempting to the rich, and tantalizing to the needy epicure. Sweet hams from Caudelas; barrels of *escabeche*

(pickles) from Biscay and Alicant;* cheese from Asturias and Castella; *mantecados*† (sweetmeats) of all kinds from Valencia and Saragossa; *torones* (preserved fruits), *roscas* (almond cakes), in long narrow flat boxes, with red and blue and yellow stripes adown; dried figs and Muscatel raisins, limes, oranges, and lemons; pomegranates

* Caudelas is the most celebrated place in the Peninsula for sweet hams,—*i. e.*, cured without salt. *Escabeche* indicates anything pickled, no matter what, fish, flesh, or fowl. This branch of the culinary art is very well understood here. Partridges, *vesugos*, &c., are excellent preserved in this way. The women of Biscay bear away the palm for housewifery, and, as compared to their sisters of the other provinces, not without justice. In my own humble opinion, however, the domestic management, cleanliness, &c., of the Guipuzeoan ladies, place them far above competition with any of their compatriots.

† The cheese of Asturias and Castella is close-grained, and of a very pungent taste (too much so to an English palate); it is highly prized here, notwithstanding a disagreeable smell and flavour. *Montecados* (cream-curds) are very grateful in summer when well made. If Spaniards were only aware of the materials they possess, and could be spurred into exertion, no country in the world would offer greater resources to the epicure.

and dates; pistachio nuts, embalmed in sugar, and in their natural state, from the fertile and sunny Malaga.* Vaya! I should never have done were I to attempt to specify and enumerate every dainty offered to the Madriderian palates at this solemn and joyous season. The *pretendiente*, (place hunter), a character *obligé*, in every scene of Spanish life, even here displays his meagre person, and disappointed face; not, poor man! to round the one, or brighten the other by a participation in such indulgences, but to contribute to those of his *incules* there, on the sandy foundation of whose influence or

* The climate of Malaga brings forth tropical productions in their full maturity and growth. The sugar-cane, and the most delicate fruits, thrive there. The famous Muscatel grape is, however, limited to a comparatively small space, beyond which it loses its size and flavour. The same singularity occurs in the transplantation of the sweet potatoe of Malaga. The soil where it flourishes is very circumscribed indeed. Experiments have been made with it, without success, not only in other parts of Andalusia equally south, but, what is remarkable, potatoes of this same crop, sown a few paces from the privileged ground, are found to be altogether degenerated.

promises his precarious hopes are rested. His family, pinched for money, and not overstocked with the good things of this world, makes a sacrifice in the shape of hams, fat capons, or turkies, to tickle the palate of *los que pueden*, and induce them to look kindly on a son, a brother, or a husband.*

A full fortnight before *la noche buena*, (Christ-

* In proof that there is no exaggeration in what has been stated in the course of these sketches, of the extreme immorality of public servants in Spain, we quote a passage from an article on this subject, which appeared, last year, in the *Boletin del Comercio*:

“ Place yourself, gentle reader, at the Puerta del Sol, or any other frequented place, you will see the enormous presents sent up by the provident provinces to the metropolis. There goes a rich load for the *abogado*, who defended well a law-suit, or gained it, no matter how. There my eyes follow the present to the adroit *agente*, (commission agent), who, by dint of toil and *relaciones*, (connections in the public offices), rounded matters. There they carry the proof of gratitude to a judge, who gave his vote in *whatever was compatible with justice* (to be understood *vice versa*). This other brings a decent recompense to the employé, who made himself useful in a reclamation, managing so, that the memorial was not delayed or lost; that it did not go to the

mas eve), there is a regular invasion of turkies in the capital. Immense flocks of those savoury birds are seen pouring through all the gates and streets, filling the air with harmonious chirpings, and tempting the appetites of the citizens. Their guardians are queer odd-built fellows, with low round hats, and dark brown vests, tight breeches (!) and hose, both of the same dingy hue, the latter oftener without a foot than with one; a broad leatherne girdle, strapped round the waist, does not prevent a fair proportion of shirt appearing in the chasm between vest and breeches over the hips, and, perhaps, behind. Some dandies indulge in a red worsted sash, which hides their linen and cash at the same time; but, in general, the *paveros* (turkey drivers) decline all superfluous ornament, preferring a republican severity of costume, devoting their whole attention, and their long taper wands, to

expediente general, and getting it a good note for the *despacho*. Further on, travels a present from a steward to his lord, for which he will receive thanks, and take care to repay himself a hundred-fold its value."

the good marshalling of their noisy protégés, and preventing their being run over by coach, cart, or horse, notwithstanding the evident good will, and energetic benedictions of coachmen as they pass. It is, however, on the meeting of two rival flocks that the tact and quick eye of the drivers are conspicuous. Dashing in recklessly among the mixing birds, with their wands in rest, they pick out the stragglers, methodize confusion, abuse one another heartily, and again separate without any loss or change of property. All this is the work of a moment. As the droves proceed in their perilous pilgrimage, their numbers gradually diminish. The well-skilled eye of the housewife, big with fate, plunges upon them from different heights and stories, selects the victim ; the *pavero* is hailed, the ten reals turned into the double of the sash; the turkey is borne off by both wings, despite of *his* inflamed and angry countenance, and resolute kicking and struggles of his long taper toes, stretched out to their full extent.

The *galeras* supply the place of mail-coaches at this season, and bring important additions to

the cargoes of Christmas fare. Between the mattings, or dangling from the arched awning, an experienced eye may detect little pet barrels of *supernaculum*; some racy wine sent as a present from the *correrero* of Malaga, to some old friend or patron in the metropolis. Groups of lounging fellows are seen parading the streets with half-a-dozen hares and rabbits, slung over their shoulder, and sticks strung with red-legged partridges, which they offer to the passengers, with loud and repeated encomiums on their fatness, flavour, and size. The men of Segovia come in with their excellent cream cheeses, white as snow. To judge by the prospect on every side, *bollas* and *pastillas*, and cakes of all sorts smiling through the shop windows, one might almost conclude that it was merely necessary to have a sharp set of teeth, and good stomach, to be "happy."

The confectioners' shops shine particularly through the clear nipping night air of December. Oil and wax-light do their utmost to mellow and throw out the tasteful and rich display within. Confectionery is a branch of industry carried to

great perfection in Spain—some say, owing to the great number of nuns and monks, who are known to be curious in such vanities. The Parisian confectioners may surpass their Spanish rivals in gorgeous laying out, but connoisseurs would hesitate to which of them to adjudge the palm of superiority.

A man thrown into the midst of a bustling crowd, should always follow the main stream, especially if he wishes to see what is going on; and, on this sound principle, I would recommend you to allow yourself to be shoved and pushed, elbowed, and trod upon, all the way from the display of *dulces* (sweetmeats) in the *Calle Montera*, until you are launched into the spacious and handsome square of the *Plaza Mayor*. This *Plaza* was destined from its cradle to be an eye-witness of sights and executions, public dances, royal bull-fights, coronation pageants, fighting and commanding for and against the *pepa*, (the constitution), fairs, markets, publication of the *bula* of the *cruzada*, and to hear the voice of the *pregonera* roaring out samples of municipal eloquence, vigilance, or

wisdom, coupled with the more persuasive tones of the mountebanks, inviting their fellow-creatures to part with their money for the pleasure of having their teeth extracted, an operation which they promise to perform without giving the least pain. *Plaza Mayor blasé*, as it may be supposed to be, from what we have just said as to sight-seeing, never beholds a more varied, rich, and animated spectacle throughout the year, than that which is exhibited a few nights before, and, more especially, on the *noche buena* (Christmas eve) itself.

The most unlucky of the eager pedestrians, he whose *capa* may have tarried with the crowd, or who may have left a shoe behind in the course of his progress to the goal, or found his pocket picked of a rich India silk handkerchief, who has had his ribs bruised, and his corns trod upon, even he must find an alleviation to his sufferings and mishaps in the contemplation of the extraordinary display before him :—collared pig and eel; the winning brilliancy of jellies, a light placed insidiously behind, displaying their transparency ; the renowned *loron* from Gijon ; Soria's

mantequilla, more canescent than the lily of the valley; red festoons of legitimate *chorios* (sausages) from Estremadura, *butifaras* from Majorca; hams, both salt and sweet; a thousand combinations of hog, and fruit, and sugar;—hapless capons, reflecting upon past misfortunes, and their present indifferent prospects; fatted turkeys* lying in fetters, between aromatic heaps of apples, figs, oranges, and lemons; numerous flaming rows of odorous rosin-torches, throwing a rich crimson glare on all that is in itself lovely; the confused mixture of costumes, sexes, and voices; the angry remonstrances of the buyers against the exactions of the venders; the emulation for the possession of some choice morsel; your own ejaculations, drawn forth over and over by the pressure of a nail-shoe upon your own; these, and many others, are the *obligato* accompaniments of the scene

* The “turkeys” hawked about the streets are not fit for table. Their leanness is in proportion with their price. Those exposed for sale in the stalls, are “crammed,” and much dearer.

and hour. Nevertheless, if the intrepid adventurer succeeds in securing a box of sweetmeats for his children, or his *querida*, even at double its value, and contrives to get back to his home without meeting with any other casualties than we have here supposed, he may consider himself as having had as much good luck as any reasonable man can aspire to.

If *Navidad* brings its pleasures, it also brings its pains, in common with many other occurrences in this sublunary sphere. Among the latter, may be reckoned the somewhat onerous and indispensable duty of all old acquaintance and *tertulianos*, to set their wits to work and empty their purses in *regalos* (treats) of sweetmeats and *frioleras* (trifles) to the families of their daily visits. From such as figure in the character of *fineza* (gallants) the compliment is also expected of inviting their fair acquaintance to assure themselves of the excellence of the confectioner's labours. Whole troops of pretty damsels may be seen in these shops, complying with the entreaties of their *debonnaire* conductors,

and swallowing macaronies, *caramelos*, and custards by the dozen, with peculiar grace and facility.

These flattering little attentions are but the preliminaries, the preluding to the important ceremony of celebrating the *noche buena*. This night is consecrated, by old custom, to family enjoyment, to which only a small circle of old friends or relatives is admitted. It is not considered delicate for the less intimate guests to present themselves that evening; if they do, they must go early, and make their retreat before ten o'clock. The repeated *idas y vueltas*, (comings in and goings out) of the lady of the house and daughters, and the mysterious looks and signs of the chubby-headed servant, at the half-opened door, will save the "non-intimate" the trouble of consulting their watches. On any the first indications they may safely and discreetly take their hats, and rest perfectly assured that they are conferring a favour by their disappearance.

When the family are left to themselves, there is a supper, punch, and refreshments; jokes are

passed, seasonable or otherwise, old stories and souvenirs are again brought up, equally tiresome; and thus things pass, until every watch declares that "it wants but a quarter to twelve." "Jesus! here are we sitting, and we shall be too late for the *Misa del Gallo** (the mass of

* The night of the 24th of December is a very busy night in most Catholic countries, for exactly at midnight, mass is celebrated in the churches, to commemorate the birth of the Saviour. It would be an edifying thing to see so many Christians out of their beds at so late an hour, and for so laudable a purpose, were such the real objects of those "vigils." But it is greatly to be feared that this is not the case. There are, no doubt, a chosen few who are actuated by the feelings suitable to the solemn occasion; but it would be carrying charity and good-nature to extremes, to suppose that those bevies of young ladies, and groups of young men, are here congregated together from any such pure and spiritual motives. A little inquiry would detect a premeditated design, to make the round of the churches, in order to see one another, and seize opportunities of intercourse and communication, not always found so conveniently at home. In some churches, a cock does really crow at midnight, and the Nativity is figured in wax, *con mucha propriedad*, (very like the original).

the cock). For God's sake, Juanito, bring me my shawl."—"And mine too, and the pattens; you will find them in the corner behind the screen. Where shall we go to? to St. Louis, or San Domingo; or the *Descalzos Reales*? were it not that this last church is so far off, I should much prefer going there. There is such fine music!"—"Señora," said at length the leader of the party, "I propose St. Louis, it is near,—and you are always sure of meeting good company in it. If the orchestra is not so full as elsewhere, the ceremony is better attended, and the *muchachas* will see all the elegantes of the capital."

The *tertulia* is soon heard, chattering along the street, the noise of brazen-shod "clacks" bearing a *stoccato* accompaniment to the voices of their mistresses. They wind up the Calle Montera, and elbow their way into the crowd already assembled in the church of *St. Luis de les Francais*. "Vaya! how brilliant! how well lit up the church is! What a number of fine young men too! Dolores, take some holy

water, and pass it to Mariquita. That old man saying mass will make a long business of it, or I am much mistaken." These devout observations bring them to the middle of the church ; the ladies tuck up their silken skirts, and let themselves slide down upon their natural support in a half-sitting posture ; the men mouth their sticks, and amuse themselves as well as they can until the "*Misa del Gallo*" is over. They see their *tertulia* home again,—wish each other a good "*descanzo*," and much amusement for the following day ;—and, with a few sleepy words about *pavos* (turkeys), and *jamones* (hams), and good appetites, they separate to sleep ; but many of the *caballeros*, also, to *tot* up the sum total of what the support of their reputation as *buenos amigos con quien se puede contar* (real friends upon whom one may count), *sujetos muy finos y atentos* (most polite and attentive men)—*y muy caballeros* (and true cavaliers) has cost them. The unambitious will find themselves *minus* some eight or ten pounds (sterling) ; those who like to *hiar* (shine), may be satisfied if their

deficit is not treble that amount. It comes, however, but once a-year, like the *Cuaresma* (Lent), and, after all, misnamed or not, it is still *Noche buena.**

* Noche buena, “literally” good night—night of rejoicings.

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